THE BENEFIT OF AFFLICTION.

A Sermon, first preached, and afterwards enlarged,

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PSAL. 94. 12.

Blessed is the man, whom thou chastisest, O Lord, and teachest him in thy Law.

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THE BENEFIT of Affliction.

PSAL. 119. 71.

It is good for me that I haue been afflicted, that I may learne thy ſtatutes.

IF it be lawfull to make compariſons betweene one part of the holy Scripture and another, which is all moſt *excellent*, as *Dauid* ſaith, being *inſpired* by one and the ſame bleſſed Spirit of God: we may truely ſay, that there is no part more worthy than the Booke of *Pſalmes*, and in them, none more full of heauenly inſtruction than this *Pſalme*. The author whereof is generally agreed upon to be *Dauid*, whom the

Pſa: 119 129.
2 Tim: 3.16.

2 Sam: 23.1. Scripture hath ſtiled, *The ſweet ſinger of Iſrael.* Who as he had a good facultie in the Art of diuine *Poetry*, and a great dexteritie in penning of *Pſalms*, to the glory of God, and the edification of his Church: ſo it is euident, that he ſhewed the excellencie of his skill in compoſing this *Pſalme:* being thereunto occaſioned and excited by the great afflictions, that were vpon him. For the *Pſalme* ſeemeth to haue bin penned in the time of his exile & baniſhment, whereby he laboureth to confirme his faith, by many comfortable meditations of the word of God. The matter of the *Pſalme* contayneth many inſtructions and prayers, all tending to direct vs in the way of godlineſſe. The generall propoſition of it is this, that they that are truely godly, are truely bleſſed, and that they are truely godly, that are acquainted with the word of God, and are carefull to frame their liues according to the directions and rules thereof.

And therefore he laboureth by many arguments throughout the whole *Pſalme*, and eſpecially by his owne example

ample to ſtirre vp all the children of God, both to the continuall meditation, and due practiſe of the word.

The *Pſalme*, as it is the longeſt of all the reſt, being diuided into two and twentie ſeuerall parts: ſo it is more curiouſly and more artificially penned than any of the reſt. For firſt, all the parts and diuiſions of it are of equall length, each of them conſiſting of eight verſes. Againe, euery diuiſion, in the originall, beginneth with an *Hebrew* letter according to the *Alphabet*, and euery verſe in that diuiſion beginneth with the ſame letter. And laſt of all, there is not any verſe in the whole *Pſalme*, but one, which maketh not ſome mention of the word of God, and hath not ſome title or other, to ſet out and commend the excellencie of it. As it is called the *Law*, the *Teſtimonies*, the *Wayes*, the *Precepts*, the *Statutes*, the *Commaundements*, the *Iudgements*, the *promiſe*, the *truth*, the *ordinances*, the *name of God*, *&c.* Now the reaſons, why the Prophet is ſo exquiſite in framing of this *Pſalme*, is to commend the excellencie of the

verſ. 122.

matter contained in it, that ſo we may be ſtirred vp to regard it with greater attention. For where the Lord is curious in ſpeaking, there ſhould we be moſt diligent in hearing and learning. As alſo it was no ſmall helpe to the memorie: for being written in the *Hebrew* tongue, it was to the Iewes in ſteed of an holy *Alphabet*, which they might learne as our children doe the *A.B.C.*

Now concerning this ninth part of the *Pſalme*, wherein this verſe that I haue read is contained, the Prophet hauing firſt thankfully acknowledged
verſ. 65. Gods mercy in *dealing gratiouſly with him*, he maketh his petition to be further taught & inſtructed in the knowledge of Gods will. Which petition he vrgeth and inforceth with diuers reaſons. Firſt, becauſe he had *beleeued*
verſ. 66. *Gods Commandement* in the end of that verſe. A ſecond reaſon is taken from his former vntowardneſſe and vntractableneſſe, that he had beene
verſ. 67. like an vnruly beaſt, that would not keep the way without beating. Where by the way, he ſheweth the benefit that

that the children of God doe receiue by the croſſe. Namely, that it ſubdueth the vntamedneſſe of their nature, and maketh them liue in better order. After this he repeateth his former acknowledgement of Gods goodneſſe, and renueth his petition to be taught, backing it with another reaſon in the two next verſes. And in this verſe, he repeateth that, which he ſaid before concerning affliction, though in other words. *It is good for me that I haue beene afflicted, that I may learne thy ſtatutes.* Wherein we are to conſider, firſt, the perſon that was afflicted, and that is *Dauid* himſelfe. *It is good for me, that I haue beene afflicted.* Secondly, the fruit which he found in his affliction, which is propounded firſt generally, *It is good for me, &c.* And then by a particular effect, which was wrought in him thereby, *That I may learne thy ſtatutes.* And thus we ſee the coherence that theſe words haue with the former, togither with the ſumme and reſolution of them. Let vs now come to the ſeuerall inſtructions contained in them. verſ. 68.

It

It is good for me.] In the example of *Dauid*, we learne, that euen the godly themſelues are ſubiect to many afflictions. The deareſt of Gods children may, and oftentimes doe ſuffer affliction with varietie, extremitie, and continuance. *Many* (ſaith *Dauid*, or *great*) *are the troubles of the righteous.* Yea, God doth many times feede his owne children *with the bread of teares, and giueth them teares to drinke in great meaſure.* And he threatneth euen thoſe, with whom he hath made a ſure couenant, and from whom he will neuer take his mercy and louing kindneſſe, that *If they forſake his law, and walke not in his iudgements: If they breake his ſtatutes, and keepe not his commaundements, hee will viſit their tranſgreſſion with the rod, and their iniquitie with ſtrokes.* And to this purpoſe is that ſaying of *Solomon*, that euen *a iuſt man falleth ſeuen times*, that is, is afflicted oft and many times. And the Apoſtle *Iames* exhorteth the faithfull, to *count it exceeding ioy, when they fall into diuers tentations*, or afflictions. And hereof the Prophet *Dauid* himſelf

Pſal: 34.19.

Pſal: 80.5.

Pſal: 89.30, 31,32,33.

Prov: 24.16.

Iam: 1.2.

is a moſt pregnant example. He was *a man that God had ſet vp on high, the Annointed of the God of Iacob.* Yea, by the Lords owne teſtimonie, he was *a man after his owne heart:* and yet he affirmeth of himſelfe, that *daily he had bin puniſhed, and chaſtened euery morning.* Euery day that went ouer his head, brought with it ſome affliction or other. He was perſecuted by *Saul*, who purſued him from place to place, *as one would hunt a Partridge in the mountaines.* He was falſely accuſed by *Doeg*, that curſed *Edomite*, betrayed and diſcouered by the falſe-hearted *Ziphims.* He was diſcomforted and derided by his wife that lay in his boſom. He had many heart-breakings with his children. *Ziklag*, the towne which *Achiſh* King of *Gath* had giuen him for his habitation, was ſacked & burnt by the *Amalekites*, & his wiues that were the comfort of his life, were taken priſoners. Yea, it may appeare to all that ſhall read his ſtorie in both the Bookes of *Samuel*, that, as if he had bin a man borne to miſerie, he ſcarce had one good day in all his life.

2 Sam: 23. 1. 1 Sam: 13. 14. Pſal: 73. 14. 1 Sam: 26. 20. & 22. 9. & 23. 19, 20. 2 Sam: 6. 20. 1 Sam: 30. 1, 3.

Neither

Neither was this the caſe of *Dauid* alone, but euen all the children of God mentioned in the Scripture, haue alſo beene partakers of the ſame condition.

Rom: 9, 13. *Iacob* that holy *Patriarke*, on whom God had ſet his loue before he was borne, was many waies afflicted in the greateſt part of his life. He was hated of his brother, and for feare of his fury, forced to leaue his owne country and his fathers houſe, and to liue as a ſeruant in a ſtrange land for the ſpace of

Gen: 31, 41. twenty yeares. He was vexed with the vnkindneſſe of his churliſh Vncle, who notwithſtanding his faithfull ſervice, changed his wages ten times. He was vpbraided and ſlaundered by his Coſins, the ſonnes of *Laban*. He was grieved with the peeuiſh behauiour of his wiues, and much diſcomforted by his children. *Iob* likewiſe, though a godly man, one of whom the Lord himſelfe teſtified, that he was *an vpright and a*

Iob: 1, 8. *iuſt man, one that feared God, and eſchewed euill*: Yet his life for a long time, was euen a Mappe of miſery. It was no ſmall affliction to looſe ſuch a deale of ſubſtance all in a day, to haue his children

dren ſo pittifully diſmembred, to haue his wife and his friēds that ſhould haue aſſwaged his ſorrow, to play the *miſerable comforters*, and to adde affliction unto his miſery, and which was worſt of all, to haue *the terrours of God to fight againſt him*. *Salomon* alſo, of whom the Lord ſaid before euer he was borne; *He ſhall be my ſonne, and I will be his Father*, and concerning whom he promiſed, that *his mercy ſhould neuer depart from him as he took it from Saul*: though he enioyed great proſperity for many yeeres: yet when *he turned his heart from the Lord God of Iſrael and kept not that which he had commanded him*, the Lord raiſed him up aduerſaries one after another, which moleſted him with warres all the dayes of his life. As firſt *Hadad*, then *Rezon*, and after him *Ieroboam*, and when he was dead, ten tribes of the kingdome were rent away from his ſonne. And *Hezekiah* a man ſo *vpright in the ſight of the Lord, as after him there was none like him among all the Kings of Iudah, neither were there any ſuch before him*; was notwithſtanding exerciſed with grieuous and continuall

Iob: 16,2, and 6, 4.

1 Chr: 22. 10.

2 Sam: 7.15.

1 King: 11, 9, 10.

1 King: 11,14, 23,26.

2 Kin: 18,5,5.

tinuall afflictions. First of al *Sanecherib*
Vers. 13, 14, 15, 16. king of *Assyria* came vp *against all the strong cities of Iudah, and took them*: and hee to make his peace, was constrained to giue him *three hundreth talents of siluer, & thirtie talents of gold*. For raising of which summe, he was forced to take all the siluer, that was found in the house of the Lord, & in the treasures of the kings house, yea, he pulled off the plates of the doore of the temple, and the pillars which himselfe had couered ouer, and gaue them to the making up of the tribute. And yet notwithstand-
17. ing all this, *Sanecherib* presently after sent a great army against Ierusalem to
and 19, 10, 11. destroy it, and caused *Rabshakeh* with a blacke mouth, to the breaking of *Hezekiahs* heart, to blaspheme the name of the liuing God: And he was no soo-
and 20, 1. ner by Gods mercy deliuered out of this danger, but straightway he was visited with a sore sickenesse (and as some thinke with the plague) which in all
Luk. 16, 20, 21 appearance was vnto death. So *Lazarus*, at whose death the *Angels* of heauē
22. were imployed to carry his soule into *Abrahams bosome*, was in his life time

time poore, impotent, harbourleſſe, diſtreſſed, & vnpittied. In a word, theſe famous *worthies* of the world, that the *Apoſtle* ſpeaketh off, *of whom the world was not worthy, were tryed, ſome by mockings and ſcourgings, ſome by bonds & impriſonment. They were ſtoned, they were hewen aſunder, they were tempted, they were ſlain by the ſword, they wandered vp and downe in ſheepſkins and goates ſkins, being deſtitute, afflicted & tormented.* Heb: 11.36, 37, 38.

And as this is true in the generall, that Gods children are ſubiect to many & great afflictions: ſo it is true alſo in the particular, that there is not any ſeuerall kind of calamitie, but it may befall a godly man. There can be no greater griefe to godly parents, thē to be troubled with wicked & graceles children: and yet the ſcripture hath many examples, of the holieſt men that euer liued, that haue beene afflicted that way. *Noah* was *a iuſt and vpright man in his time, and walked with God*: yet had he a wretched *Cham*, that ſcoffed at the infirmities of his father, and therefore was curſed, both himſelfe, and his poſteritie. Gen: 6.9. and 9.22.25.

Abraham that

was

was *the Father of all them that beleeue*,
Rom 4. 11. Gen: 21. 9. had a wicked *Ishmael*, *the sonne of the bondwoman*, who by mocks and taunts
Gal: 4. 29. *persecuted Isaack the sonne of the promise.*
Heb: 12. 16. Holy *Isaack* had a *profane Esau* as the *Apostle* calleth him, who of set purpose
Gen: 26. 34. 35, and 27, 46, and 28, 8, 9. to displease his father tooke him wiues of other nations, as bad as himselfe, who by their disobedience and rebellion, were *a griefe of minde* to his Parents, & made his mother *weary of her life*. Good *Iacob* was troubled with *Simeon and Leui brethren in evill*, who *in*
Gen: 34, 30. and 49, 5, 6, *their wrath & selfewill*, committed such a bloody outrage vpon the *Sichemites*, as caused their father *to bee abhorred among the inhabitants of the Land*. *Eli* the
1 Sam: 2, 12. 17, 22. *Priest* a good man, had sonnes that were *wicked and knew not the Lord*, who behaued themselues so vilely in their places, *lying with the women that assembled at the doore of the Tabernacle of the congregation, that men abhorred the of-*
and 3, 20. *fering of the Lord. Faithfull Samuel, the Lords Prophet*, as he is called by the holy Ghost, had sonnes that *walked*
and 8, 3. *not in his wayes, but turned aside after lucre, and tooke rewards and peruerted*

iudgement.

iudgement. And *Dauid* of whom we haue heard ſuch high commendation before, had as much heartbreake by his childrē, as euer poore father could haue. Firſt, *Amnō* moſt beaſtly rauiſhed and defloured *Tamar* his owne ſiſter. Afterward *Abſalom*, to reuenge that vil lany, inuited him to a feaſt at his Sheepeſhering, and cauſed his ſeruants treacherouſly to kill him. And in the end hee rebelled againſt his father, driue him out of his kingdome, & had not God prevented him, would haue taken the Crowne from his head. It is no ſmall miſerie, to be expoſed to open contēpt & reproach in the world, to be deſpiſed and made the laughing-ſtocke of baſe people. And yet this was *Iobs* caſe, & that in as high a degree as poſſible could be. For ſo he complaineth, that euen they *whoſe fathers he refuſed to ſet with the dogs of his flocke*, mocked him & inſulted ouer him. Yea, *the children of villaines*, & ſuch as *were more vile thē the earth*, made him their *ſong* and their *talke*. Yea they *did not ſpare to ſpit in his face*. Neither was this indignity offered him by ſtrangers

2 Sam: 13. 14. 24. 28.

cap: 15. 16. 17. 18.

Iob: 31. 1.

8.

9. 10.

onely, but he was deſpiſed alſo in his
and 19, 15, owne family. *They that dwelt in his houſe* (as he ſaith) *and his maides tooke*
16. *him for a ſtranger. He called his ſeruant,*
but he would not anſwere, though he prai-
17. *ed him with his mouth.* Yea, *his breath was ſtrange to his wife, though he prayed her for the childrens ſake of his owne body.* Hee that ſhall conſider the great authority, that *Iob* was in before the Lord humbled him, as hee ſaith, how men of all ſorts eſteemed and reuerenced him, may eaſily thinke, what a griefe it was to his heart, to bee now made a laughing ſtocke to fooles. And *Dauid*, had his part likewiſe in the
Pſa: 35. 15, 16. ſame croſſe. For *the abiects aſſembled themſelues againſt him*, in time of his aduerſity, *they tare him and ceaſed not. The ſcoffers at bankets gnaſhed their teeth*
and 69. 11, 12 *againſt him.* Yea, *he became a prouerb and a by-word vnto them*, and *the very drunkards made ſongs of him.*

It is a grieuous thing to bee impriſoned, to *lye in darkneſſe in the ſhadow of*
and 107, 10. *death, faſt bound in miſery and yron*, as *Dauid* ſaith. And yet many of Gods deareſt children haue bin tryed

and

and afflicted therwith. *Ioseph*, a good man, & one that was alwaies carefull not to sin against God, by the false accusation of his Mistresse was put in prison; where hee lay diuerse yeeres; so as his *feete was hurt in the stockes and the yron entred into his soule.* *Ieremiah*, a man that was *sanctified by the Lord before hee came out of the wombe, and ordeined to be a Prophet*, was often brought into this affliction. First, *Pashur the Priest smote him, and put him in the stockes that were in the gate of Beniamin.* After this, *hee was shut vp in the court of the prison, that was in the King of Iudahs house.* Againe, *the princes smote him, and laide him in prison in the house of Iehonathan the scribe, where hee remained in the dungeon a long time.* And last of all, *they tooke him & cast him into the dungeon that was in the court of the prison, and let him downe with cordes, where there was no water but mire: so that he stacke fast in the mire.* So likewise *Michaiah* a faithfull *Prophet*, by the commandement of *Ahab*, was put into the prison house, where *he was fed with*

Gen: 39. 19, 20. Psal: 105. 18. Ier: 1. 5. and 20, 1, 2, and 32, 2. and 37, 15, 16, and 38, 6. 1 Kin, 22, 27.

the bread of affliction, and with water of affliction. And the *Apoſtle Peter* was
Act. 12,4,6,7. caught vp by *Herod, and put in priſon, & deliuered to foure quaternions of ſoldiers to be kept,* where he was *bound with two chaines,* not his feet onely, but his hands alſo. And the *Apoſtle Paul* & *Si-*
and 16.23.24. *las* were deliuered to a cruell *Iaylor*; who *caſt them into the bottom,* or dũgeon *of the priſon, and made faſt their feete in the ſtocks.* And thus were many of Gods bleſſed *Martyrs* vſed in the time of Popery. Who were not only put in priſõ, but they were kept in the ſtocks both hands and feete, ſo long, as ſome of them dyed as they ſate.

Shipwrack is a fearefull thing and a
2 Cor. 11.25. heauy affliction: yet the *Apoſtle Paul* ſuffered it *thrice*, as he ſaith himſelfe. The *Euangeliſt S. Luke* recordeth one of them at large. Namely, that they
Act. 27. 18. 19 20. were *toſſed with an exceeding tempeſt,* in ſo much as they were enforced to *lighten the ſhip,* by caſting the goods into the ſea, yea *with their owne hands to caſt out the tackling of the ſhip.* Yea, the tempeſt that lay vpon them was of that continuance, that *neither ſunne nor ſtarres*

ſtarres for many dayes appeared, and all hope that they ſhould be ſaued was taken away. And in the end, *the forepart* of the ſhip *ſtacke faſt in a narrow place of the ſea and could not be moued*, and the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waues. And the men that were in her, conſtrained ſo many as could ſwimme, to caſt themſelues into the ſea, and ſo goe out to land, and the reſt, ſome vpon bords, and ſome on pieces of the ſhip, to eſcape and ſaue themſelues. He that had ſtood on the ſhore at that time, no doubt ſhould haue ſeene a fearefull and lamentable ſpectacle: but hee that had beene a partie in it himſelfe, would haue found it an vnſpeakable danger. Act. 27. 41. 43 44.

It is a great heauineſſe for a man to looſe a louing friend, which was to him *as his owne ſoule*, as *Moſes* ſaith. And yet this was *Dauids* caſe in the death of *Ionathan, whoſe ſoule was knit to the ſoule of Dauid*, and they loued one another as their owne ſoules, and they made a couenant together. And how hee tooke it to heart, may appeare by that dolefull lamentation, Deut: 13. 6. 1 Sam: 18. 1. 3.

that he maketh for him when he heard
2 Sam: 1. 26. the tydings of his death; *Woe is me for thee, my brother Ionathan: very kind hast thou beene to me: thy loue to me was wonderfull, passing the loue of women.*

The losse of children by any means whatsoeuer, is a great griefe to kinde and louing parents, who haue borne them with great paine and trauell, and brought them vp with much care and cost. But to be depriued of them by vntimely, violent, and fearfull death, is a griefe that cannot be expressed. None knoweth the greatnesse of it, but they that haue felt it. And yet this hath befallen euen the deerest of Gods children. *Aaron*, whom the Scripture cal-
Psa: 106. 16. leth the *Saint of the Lord*, had his two sons, *Nadab* & *Abihu* fearfully destroy-
Leuit: 10, 2. ed both in a moment with fire frō heauen. *Eli* a good man, had likewise his
1 Sam: 4, 11. two sons *Hophni* & *Phinehas* slaine in battell both on a day. *Iob* also, whose
Iob: 1, 2, 19. godlines we haue heard before, had all his children, *seuen sons & three daughters*, pittifully slaine and chrusht in pieces with the fall of an house. But the greatest griefe of all is, when a mans

childe

childe is taken away in ſome ſin, ſo as, beſides the death of the body, he hath iuſt cauſe to feare the death of the ſoule. And yet this was good *Dauids* caſe, in the loſſe of his *Abſalom*, which made him breake forth into ſuch paſſionate mourning as he did. *O my ſonne Abſalom, my ſonne, my ſonne Abſalom, would God I had died for thee, O Abſalom my ſonne, my ſonne.* 2 Sam. 18, 33.

It is a great griefe for a man to bee depriued of the *wife of his youth*, which hath long *lyen in his boſome*, which for many yeeres hath beene vnto him as *the louing hinde and pleaſant Roe*, in whoſe loue he hath ſo long delighted, and which was *the pleaſure and deſire of his eyes*. And yet this befell thoſe two holy Patriarkes *Abraham and Iacob*, *Abraham* was depriued of his deareſt *Sara*, and *Iacob* of *Rahel*, whom he ſo much affected. Pro: 5, 18. Deut: 13, 6. Prou. 5, 19. Ezech: 24. 16. Gen: 23. 2. and 35, 19.

There cannot be a greater affliction to a poore woman, then to looſe a kind and louing husband, which was *the vaile of her eies* in all places. But with the loſſe of an husband, to be bereft of all meanes of maintenance, and Gen: 20. 16.

exposed to extreme pouertie, is such a crosse as can hardly be imagined. And yet we haue examples euen of this
Ruth 1. 3. kinde also. Poore *Naomi*, was depriued of her husband in a strange countrey, where shee had few friends, and small meanes, and her two sonnes, which had taken them wiues there, in
5. the land of *Moab*, died also, so that she was left alone and destitute of succour? And how much she was affected with this calamitie, may appeare by her speeches, when shee returned againe into her owne countrey. *Call me*
20. *not Naomi*, saith she (that is, beautifull) *but call me Mara* (that is, bitter) *for the Almightie hath giuen me much bitternesse. I went out full, and the Lord hath*
21. *brought me home againe emptie: why then call yee me Naomi, seeing the Lord hath humbled me, and the Almightie hath brought me into aduersitie.* So likewise the Prophets wife that dyed in
2 King. 4. 1. the land of *Israel*, besides the losse of her husband, was left in great debt, and hauing nothing to pay, the mercilesse creditor *came to take her two sons to be his bondmen.*

It

It is an vncomfortable thing to dye in child-birth: and yet it was the case of *Rachel, Iacobs* wife, who dyed *in the paines of her labour*: & of *Elies* daughter in law, who hearing that the *Arke of God was taken*, and her husband and father in law were dead, *bowed her selfe and trauelled, and in her trauell dyed.* Gen: 35.17, 18 1 Sam: 4. 19, 20.

It is fearefull to dye a violent death, and yet it is a thing that hath hapned euen vnto those that were deere vnto God. *Eli* (of whom we haue heard before) when he heard mention of the losse of Gods Arke, being heauy & vnweildie with age, *fell backward from his seat, and his necke was broken*, and so he dyed. The Prophet of the Lord, that was sent to cry against the Altar, which *Ieroboam* had made at *Bethel*, because he kept not the commandement which the Lord commanded him, *a Lyon met him by the way & slew him, and his carkase was cast in the way.* And good *Iosiah*, who is so highly commended for his godlinesse, was notwithstanding slaine in the warres by *Pharaoh Necho*, King of Egypt. Nay, a man may be so far left to himselfe, 1 Sam: 4. 18. 1 King: 13.24. 2 King: 23.29.

ſelfe, as he may commit ſuch a ſinne, whereby he may deſerue to be cut off by the ſword of the Magiſtrate, & yet ſtill be the child of God. As the ſinnes that *Dauid* comitted, by the expreſſe law of God were to be puniſhed with death, if there had bin any Magiſtrate aboue him that had had power to inflict it. By all theſe particular inſtances, and many more that might be produced, it may appeare, that there is not any kind of affliction or calamitie, but the children of God may be ſubiect vnto it: according to that enùmeration, which the Apoſtle maketh, when he ſaith, *Who ſhall ſeparate vs from the loue of Chriſt? ſhall tribulation or anguiſh, or perſecution, or famine, or nakedneſſe, or perill, or ſword? &c.* A man may be ſubject to all theſe miſeries, and yet not be depriued of the loue of Chriſt.

Rom: 8.35.

But beſides all theſe outward afflictions, the children of God may be, & oftentimes are ſubject to inward feare and horror of conſcience, which as *Salomon* ſaith, is the moſt intolerable torment that can be indured. *The ſpirit of a man will ſuſtaine his infirmitie: but a*

Prov: 18. 14.

wounded

wounded ſpirit who can beare? Iob was not onely afflicted in his body & outward eſtate; but alſo troubled & wounded in his conſcience, with the fearfull apprehenſion of Gods wrath. And therefore he complaineth, *that the arrowes of the Almightie were in him, the venime or poyſon whereof did drinke vp his ſpirit, & the terrors of God did fight, or ſet themſelues in array againſt him.* Iob 6.4. And *Dauid* cryeth out, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me, and art ſo farre from my health, and from the words of my roaring?* And in another place, he ſaith, *When I held my tongue, my bones conſumed when I roared all the day long. For thy hand was heauie vpon me day and night, and my moyſture is turned into the drought of ſummer.* Pſal. 22.1. & 32.3, 4. And in another place, he maketh ſuch a lamentable complaint, as if he had beene brought to the very pit of deſperation. *Thine arrowes*, ſaith hee, *ſticke faſt in me, and thy hand preſſeth me ſore. There is nothing ſound in my fleſh, becauſe of thine anger: neither is there any reſt in my bones, by reaſon of my ſinne. For mine iniquities are gone* &38.2,3,4,5, 6,7,8.

ouer

ouer mine head, and as a mightie burden they are too heauie for me. My wounds ſtinke, and are corrupt, becauſe of my fooliſhneſſe. I am bowed and crooked very ſore: I goe mourning all the day. For my reynes are full of burning, and there is nothing ſound in my fleſh. I am weakned, and ſore broken: I roare for the very griefe of my heart, &c. And againe, *Out of the deepe places haue I called vnto thee, O Lord:* as if he had bin euen in the bottome of hell. In a word, *Hezekiah* that good King complaineth, that beſides the ſickneſſe which God laid vpon his body, that brought him euen to deaths dore, *the Lord had broken all his bones like a Lyon, and from day to night he made an end of him, and that he chattered like a Crane or Swallow, and mourned as a Doue.* By this we ſee, that euen the children of God doe many times wraſtle with deſperation it ſelfe: and the Lord doth ſo long hide his face from them, as they ſeeme vtterly to be forſaken, and begin to thinke, that *his mercy is cleane gone for euer*, as *Dauid* ſaith, and that he *will be fauourable no more.* And therefore, the

Pſal: 130 1.

Iſa: 38. 13, 14.

Church

Church of God is compared to *a Lillie among thornes*; to giue vs to vnderſtand, that though it be very louely and beautifull in the ſight of God: yet it is ſubiect to many miſeries, and accombred with many moleſtations.

But here it may be ſome will obiect, if the caſe be ſo that the children of God be ſubiect to ſo many and great afflictions, then it ſeemeth, that either their ſins are not fully forgiuen them; or elſe, that God is not iuſt in inflicting ſuch puniſhments vpon them. To this I anſwer, that firſt, for the ſins of Gods children, they are all abſolutely forgiuen. *The bloud of Chriſt*, as the Apoſtle ſaith, *doth cleanſe vs from all ſin.* So that though they *be as ſcarlet*, yet the Lord maketh them *as white as ſnow*; and tho they be *red like crimſon*, he maketh them *as wooll.* Yea, the Lord *putteth away our tranſgreſſions like a cloud, and our ſinnes like a miſt, he ſubdueth our iniquities, and caſteth them into the bottome of the Sea:* ſo as they ſhall neuer riſe vp in iudgement againſt vs to accuſe or condemne vs. Againe, the Lord is *righteous in all his wayes, and holy in all*

Pſal: 103. 3. Col: 2. 13. 1 Ioh: 1. 7. Iſa: 1. 8. & 44 22. Mich: 7. 19. Pſal: 145. 17.

all his workes: and being *Iudge of all the world,* as *Abraham* ſaid, *he muſt needs doe right.* And foraſmuch as our Sauiour Chriſt hath ſatisfied Gods iuſtice for our ſins, & hath *borne them in his bodie on the croſſe:* & ſeeing the Lord hauing puniſhed them once in Chriſt, cannot juſtly puniſh them again in us: therfore, it muſt needs follow, that the miſeries, whereunto the children of God are ſubject, are not puniſhments of their ſins, but the Lord hath other ends for wch he afflicteth them. Now the ends are many, but for order ſake, we will referre them to three heads. Some of them are in reſpect of God; ſome in reſpect of vs, & ſome in reſpect of others. The end that God aimeth at in reſpect of himſelfe, is twofold. Firſt, thereby to manifeſt and ſet forth his owne glory. As our Sauiour ſaid cõcerning the man that was borne blinde, that that affliction was laid vpon him, neither for his own ſins, nor for his fathers ſinnes, *but that the workes of God might be ſhewed on him.* And indeed no ſmall glory redoundeth vnto God by the afflictions of his children. As the power

Gen: 18.25.

1 Pet: 2. 24.

Non bis punitur in idem.

Ioh: 9. 2, 3.

power of God is more magnified and declared in aduerſitie, than euer it could be in proſperitie. For that which the Lord ſaid to the Apoſtle *Paul* concerning inward tentations, is true alſo of outward afflictiõs, *My power is made perfit through weaknes.* 2 Cor: 12.9. For when we are in proſperitie, & ſee no euill, we ſeem not to ſtand in neede of Gods help. But when God deliuereth vs out of trouble, then is his power manifeſted, and then we haue occaſion offered to glorifie him. As it is ſaid in the Pſalme: *Call vpon me in the day of trouble, and I wil deliuer thee, & thou ſhalt glorifie me.* Pſal: 50. 15. Yea, though the Lord for cauſes beſt known to himſelfe, do not deliuer his children out of their miſeries and tribulations: yet this is no ſmall matter of glory vnto him, that in the midſt of them, he miniſtreth cõfort vnto them, and maketh them cheerfull, & cauſeth them to *reioyce with ioy vnſpeakable and glorious.* 2 Cor: 1.4. 1 Pet: 1.8. Secondly, to declare his anger & indignatiõ againſt ſin, that when the wicked ſhal ſee that Gods deereſt children, if they take libertie to ſin, do not eſcape the rod, they may know what them-

themſelues are to looke for at his hands, according to that ſpeech of the
1 Pet: 4.17. Apoſtle *Peter*; *If iudgement firſt begin at the houſe of God, what ſhall be the end of them that obey not the Goſpell of God?*

The ends that God aymeth at in reſpect of vs, are diuers. Firſt, to correct and chaſten vs for our faults: As the
1 Cor: 11. 32. Apoſtle ſaith, *When we are iudged, we are chaſtened of the Lord.* As a father that hath care of his childe, if he ſee him take euill courſes, will correct him to bring him to amendment: ſo our moſt mercifull father will not ſuffer his
Heb: 12. 6. children to continue in ſin, but vſeth corrections to reclaime them. Secondly, to try and exerciſe the graces that are in them, and to make them more conſpicuous. Not as though the Lord were ignorant of them. For he that made them, muſt needs know what is in them. And therefore, it is ſaid of our
Ioh: 2. 24, 25. Sauiour Chriſt, that howſoeuer many profeſſed to beleeue in him; yet he *did not commit himſelfe vnto them, becauſe he knew them all, and had no neede that any man ſhould teſtifie of man; for he knew what was in man.* But he doth it, that

men

men may know themſelues, and that it may appeare vnto others, what excellent things God hath wrought in them. Thus ſayd *Iob* of his afflictions, hee knew they were no puniſhments of his ſins, as his friends would haue perſwaded him, but tryals of his faith and patience. *Hee knoweth my way*, ſaith he, *and tryeth me, and I ſhall come forth like the gold.* And the Apoſtle *Peter* ſaith, that the children of God are *in heauineſſe, through manifold tentations, that the tryall of their faith, being much more precious than gold that periſheth, might be found to their praiſe, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Ieſus Chriſt.* God will not ſuffer the graces of his children to lye idle, and to ruſt in them, but by afflictions will exerciſe them, and bring them to light. As Saint *Auguſtine* ſaith well. [a] Affliction is not a puniſhment of ſin, but a tryall of our vertue. And firſt, the faith of Gods children is hereby tryed and manifeſted. When a man is in no danger nor miſery, it is an eaſie matter for him to beleeue; but when he groneth vnder the burden of affliction, and

Iob 23.10.

1 Pet. 1.6,7.

[a] *De Ciu. Dei lib. 5. cap. 3.*

ſeemeth euen to be quite forſaken of the Lord, thē by the power of his faith to cry with *Dauid*, *My God, my God*; & with *Iob*, *though he ſlay mee, yet will I truſt in him*, is a matter of great difficultie. Againe, their Chriſtian courage appeareth. We thinke, we are ſtrong enough, til we be put to the triall. (*a*) As many vaine cowards in the middeſt of their cups, wil make great boaſt of their valor; but when they come into the field, they dare not looke the enemie in the face. *Seneca* an heathen man, that neuer knew, what the valor of a true *Chriſtian* meant, could yet ſay of moral fortitude (*a*) that it withereth & becōmeth feeble if it have not an aduerſary to encounter withall. The skill of a Pilot is beſt diſcerned in the greateſt tempeſt, and the courage of a Soldier in the hotteſt skirmiſh. So the fortitude of a *Chriſtian Soldier* appeareth moſt in the greateſt and heauieſt affliction. How can it bee knowne, what courage a man hath to endure ſickneſſe and pouertie, &c. if he alwaies haue his health, and abound in riches. Moreouer their patience is by this

Pſal: 22: 1. Iob: 13.15.

(*a*) De diuina prouidentia.

this means made knowne. *Patience* is a vertue, which is alwaies neceſſarie for us, but if it be not exerciſed, we ſhall haue little vſe of it. As when a ſword is ruſted in the ſheath, a man may be wounded by his aduerſary before he can draw it forth: ſo when patience is not tried, the Deuill may wound a man to death, before he be able to defend himſelfe with it. Laſt of all, by this meanes their loue to God is moſt of all declared. It is not any thing worth for a man to loue God, when all things proſper with him, and ſucceed according to his owne deſire. Now if a man ſhould not loue God then, euen in the iudgement of the deuill, it were pity of his life. For he could ſay when the Lord commended *Iob*. *Doth Iob feare God for nought? haſt thou not made an hedge about him, and about his houſe, and about all that he hath on euery ſide? thou haſt bleſſed the worke of his hands, and his ſubſtance is increaſed in the land.* Nay, he that ſhall onely loue God in this reſpect, may ſeeme to loue him for what will you giue me rather then for his own ſake. But he that cleaueth Iob. 1. 9. 10.

ueth vnto God in the time of Affliction, when all things goe crosse with him, that is a token of true loue indeed. Thus wee see, how the graces of Gods children are manifested in affliction, more than they could bee in prosperity. As bricks, if they be not throughly hardned in the fire, will by and by be dissolued; if they come into the water: So vnlesse the graces of Gods children be continually exercised, the least affliction that is, will ouercome them. Spices neuer giue a sweeter smell, than when they are beaten to powder: so the graces of God in his children, are neuer so fragrant and odoriferous, as when they are (as it were) pounded by affliction, according to that speech of the Apostle, *Tribulation bringeth forth patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, &c.* Whereunto agreeth that saying of S. *Augustine*, [d] Affliction daunteth not the patience and fortitude of them that bee good, neither rooteth godlinesse out of their mindes, but by exercising of it, maketh it more fruitfull. And that of *Bernard*, [e] The fire of affliction tryeth the

Rom. 5. 3, 4.

[d] *De Ciu. Dei. lib. 1. cap. 13.*

[e] *In Psal. 91. Serm 5.*

the graces of the Godly, but it doth not consume them.

Thirdly, the Lord afflicteth his children to preuent sinne to come. There is in the best of vs such a masse of corruption, as that vpon euery occasion, we are apt and prone to fall into sin: and therefore, for preuenting thereof, it is necessary that the Lord should afflict vs. As a skilfull *Physician* many times prescribeth medicines to preserue from sickenesse: so doth the Lord vse affliction to preserue his children from sin. *They that bee whole* (as our *Sauiour Christ* sayth) *need not a Physician.* So, if wee were sound indeed, and had no corruption in vs, we should not need to be dealt withall in this manner. But being corrupted and distempered as wee are, wee stand in need to bee purged and let bloud by affliction. Matth. 9. 12.

Fourthly, by afflictions, the Lord doth giue vs some comfortable testimony of the resurrection to a better life. For seeing the Godly are for the most, in this life so euill intreated, they may assure themselues, that in the life

to come, there shal be a blessed change and alteration, wherein *God shall wipe away all teares from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, neither shall there bee any more paine.* But, *they that haue continued with Christ Iesus in his tentations, shall haue a Kingdome appointed vnto them by him, that they may eat & drink at his table in his Kingdom, &c.* This is that which *Abraham* told the rich Glutton, being in Hell in torments, *Son,* saith he, *remember that thou in thy life time receiuedst thy pleasures, & likewise Lazarus paines: now therfore is he comforted, and thou art tormented.*

Fiftly, by afflictions, wee are made conformable vnto *Christ.* For he was not exempt from the Crosse, as one saith well. [a] God had one Son without sin, but none without affliction. Though he were *the author of eternall saluation to all that obey him:* yet he was *consecrate by afflictions.* Yea, albeit hee were the *beloued Son of God, in whom he is well pleased:* yet we see his Father was so far from cockering and pampering of him, that we may truely say, he was not onely exercised with afflictions,

[a] *Calu. Instit. lib. 2. cap. 8. Sect. 1.*

Heb. 5. 9.

Matth. 3. 17.

whiles he was vpon the earth: but his whole life was nothing elſe but a continuall croſſe. Why then ſhould wee looke to bee exempted from that condition, which Chriſt our Head was to vndergo? eſpecially ſeeing he did vndergoe it for our ſakes, that in himſelfe hee might giue vs an example of patience. And therfore the Apoſtle teacheth vs, that all the children of God are *predeſtinated* to this end, *that they might be made like the Image of him.* In a word, by afflictions, the Lord doth ſeale vnto vs the aſſurance of our adoption. For, as the Apoſtle ſaith, *Whom the Lord loueth he chaſteneth, and hee ſcourgeth euery ſon that hee receiueth. If yee endure chaſtening, God offereth himſelfe vnto you as ſons: for what ſon is it, whom the Father chaſteneth not? If therefore yee be without correction, whereof all are partakers, then are yee baſtards, and not ſons.* Where wee are taught, that wee can gather no greater teſtimony, that we are the ſons of God, than from the louing corrections which hee layeth vpon vs.

Ioh.15.20.

Rom.8.29.

Heb.12.6,7,8.

Laſt of all, there is a good end of our

afflictions in reſpect of others. If we be conſtant and couragious vnder the croſſe, our example is a notable encouragement vnto others to tread in our ſteps. If we be fearefull and faint-hearted, others may learne what frailty there is in man, and may thereby be moued to pittie vs, as if it were their owne caſe: as alſo to comfort vs, and to pray for vs; & to watch more carefully and diligently ouer themſelues. To conclude, the way to euerlaſting glory, is by this meanes as it were chalked out. For hereby all men may ſee, that *Whoſoeuer will liue godly in Chriſt Ieſus, muſt ſuffer perſecution:* and that, *Through many tribulations we muſt enter into the kingdome of Heaven.* And thus we ſee the point is ſufficiently cleared, that afflictions to Gods children are no puniſhments of their ſins; but that the Lord ſendeth them for many other good ends and purpoſes.

Rom: 12. 15. Heb: 13. 3. 2 Tim: 3. 12. Acts 14. 22.

Vſe 1. The Vſe of this Doctrine is very profitable. Firſt, it ſerueth to teach euery one of vs, to *iudge wiſely*, as *Dauid* ſaith, *of the poore, and thoſe that are afflicted.* There is a corruption in our nature,

Pſal: 41. 1.

nature, which maketh vs raſhly conclude, when we ſee a man afflicted with ſome heauy croſſe, that ſurely it is Gods judgement vpon him for his ſinne. So dealt the Barbarians with the Apoſtle *Paul*, when they ſaw a Viper leap vpon him, and hang vpon his hand, they ſaid preſently among themſelues: *This man ſurely is a murtherer, whom though he haue eſcaped the Sea; yet vengeance hath not ſuffered to liue.* Acts 28.3,4. Yea, this corruption will euen creepe into the beſt of vs all, if we doe not endeuour to keepe it out. As we ſee in *Iobs* friends, who though they were otherwiſe men of great knowledge, and (no doubt) godly: yet when they ſaw the ſtrange afflictions that God had brought vpon him, they by and by, with one conſent, paſſe their cenſure vpon him, That he was an hypocrite, and that GOD had now found him out. As *Bildad* telleth him plainely, that his ſonnes had ſinned againſt GOD, and therefore that he had juſtly ſent them *To the place of their iniquitie.* Iob 8.4. And *Zophar* bids him know, *that God had forgotten* Iob 11.6.

him

him for his iniquitie. Yea, *Eliphaz* commeth to particulars with him: *Is not*
Iob 22. 5,6,7, 9. (ſaith he) *thy wickedneſſe great, and thine iniquities innumerable? For thou haſt taken the pledge from thy brother for nought, and ſpoyled the cloathes of the naked. To ſuch as were weary, thou haſt not giuen water to drinke, and haſt withdrawne bread from the hungry. Thou haſt caſt out widowes emptie, and the armes of the fatherleſſe were broken.* Where we ſee, hee is not afraid to charge *Iob* with oppreſſion and vnmercifulneſſe, as if theſe had been the cauſes of his calamitie. And the Diſciples of our Sauiour Chriſt, when they ſaw a man that was borne blinde, they ſtraightway imagined, that it was ei-
Iohn 9. 1, 2. ther for his owne or his parents ſins. But we muſt know, that euery croſſe is not a purſuing of a man for ſinne, as our Sauiour teacheth vs in the Goſpel, when he ſaid to them that ſhewed him
Luk: 13. 1,2,3, 4,5. of the *Galileans*, whoſe bloud *Pilate* had mingled with their owne ſacrifices: *Suppoſe yee, that theſe Galileans, were greater ſinners, than all other Galileans, becauſe they haue ſuffered ſuch things.*

things. I tell you nay, &c. Or thinke yee, that thoſe eighteene, vpon whom the Tower in Siloam fell and ſlew them, were ſinners aboue all that dwell in Ieruſalem? I tell you nay, &c. And therefore, if any of vs haue beene fooliſh this way, and haue thought wickedly and vncharitably of our brethren, when we haue ſeene them viſited by the hand of God, let vs learne henceforth, as *Salomon* ſaith, *to lay our hand vpon our mouthes, Pro:* 30.32. leſt we condemne the generation of Gods children, *Pſal.* 73.15. Saint *Auguſtine* hath a moſt excellent ſaying to this purpoſe: Although (ſaith he) the godly and the wicked be alike afflicted; yet they are diſtinct the one from the other, there remaineth an vnlikeneſſe of the ſufferers, in the likeneſſe of their ſufferings. For, as vnder one and the ſame fire, gold ſhineth and gliſtereth, and chaffe ſmoaketh: and vnder one and the ſame flaile, the ſtraw is broken in peeces, and the corne is purged: neither are the lees therefore mingled with the oyle, becauſe they are ſtrained out in one and the ſame preſſe: So one

a *Manet diſſimilitudo paſſorum in ſimilitudine paſſionum.*

one and the ſame violence ruſhing vpon the Godly and the wicked, tryeth, purifieth and melteth the one, but it damneth, deſtroyeth, and vtterly vndoeth the other. [b] So great a matter it is, not what things one ſuffereth, but how he is qualified that ſuffereth. For one and the ſame motion cauſeth the dung to ſtinke horribly, and the oyntment to ſmell moſt ſweetly: So that afflictions are like the red Sea, wherin the *Ægyptians* were drowned, and the *Iſraelites* were ſaued.

[b] *De Ciu: Dei lib: 1: cap: 8.*

Vſe 2. Secondly, it ſerveth to comfort all Gods children in the middeſt of the greateſt afflictions that can befall them. It is the infirmity and weaknes of our nature to thinke, that affliction is a token of Gods anger, and that if any extraordinary croſſe doe befall vs, wee preſently feare that God hath forſaken vs. But as wee heard already, though God afflict vs with many and heauie croſſes; yet wee are neuer the leſſe deare vnto him, neither doth hee loue vs any whit the leſſe. An Heathen man, that neuer had experience of the loue of God to his children

dren, had yet a glimmering of the truth of this poynt. [c] Doeſt thou not ſee, ſaith he, that fathers loue their children far otherwiſe then mothers doe? They would haue their children ſtirred vp betimes, to vndergoe labor and toyle, and cauſe them to ſweat, yea ſometimes to weep. But mothers deſire to cheriſh them in their boſomes, and to keep them in couert and ſhelter: they would neuer haue them weepe, they would neuer haue them ſad, they would neuer haue them take paines. In like manner (ſaith hee) God hath a fatherly affection towards good men, and loueth them not effeminately, but manfully, and exerciſeth them with labours, with ſorrowes, with loſſes, that ſo they may gather true ſtrength and hardneſſe: So that the greater that our afflictions are, the better may we be perſwaded of the loue of God: yea, the more comfort wee may take in them. For God hauing promiſed, that *He will not ſuffer vs to be tempted aboue that wee are able*: wee may aſſure our ſelues, that God ſeeth we haue ſtrength to beare them, or elſe hee would not put

[c] *Senec. De Diuin. Prouid.*

1 Cor 10. 13.

put vs to encounter with them. When a Captaine hath a peece of ſeruice weighty and full of danger, he will not ſend a coward or a white-liuered fellow about it; but he maketh choiſe of thoſe that are ſtouteſt, and of whoſe valour and courage he hath had moſt experience, and to them hee committeth the charge of that buſines; So dealeth the Lord with vs. In his great wiſdome and mercy he proportioneth his afflictions, according to that meaſure of ſtrength which he ſeeth in vs. When a Phyſitian hath to deale with a Patient that is of a ſtrong conſtitution, he miniſtreth to him ſtrong purgations: But if he be weake and feeble, he preſcribeth for him milder potions. In like manner, our heauenly Phyſitian maketh the cup of our afflictions more bitter or more milde, as he knoweth he hath giuen vs abilitie to beare the ſame. And ſo long as hee ſtrengthneth vs by his glorious power, we neede not care what croſſes wee meete withall: for wee may be ſure they ſhall not hurt vs. For, as ſo many riuers which daily doe runne into the Sea,

Sen: de divin: Provid.

Sea, and ſuch aboundance of raine that falleth continually into it from the Clouds, and ſuch a multitude of fountaines that ſpring from the middle of the earth, doe not change, no, nor any whit abate or diminiſh the ſalt ſauour thereof: ſo the violence & force of afflictions doth not alter the minde of a godly man, but he abideth in his eſtate, and whatſoeuer befalleth, hee bringeth it into his owne colour. And on the contrary ſide, there is no greater cauſe of diſcomfort, than when we are altogither free from afflictions. And therefore one calleth a ſecure life, which is not ſubject to croſſes, the dead Sea, affirming, that when a man hath nothing to ſtirre him vp, and pricke him forward, nothing to try the conſtancie and firmeneſſe of his minde, but lyeth buried in idleneſſe, it is not tranquillitie, but a dead calme.

Non eſt tranquillitas, malitia eſt. Sen: ep: 68.

Againe, this is no ſmall argument of comfort, that God beholdeth vs in all our troubles and afflictions, as it is ſaid of the people of *Iſrael*, when they groned vnder the bondage of *Pharao*, that

Exod: 2. 25.

that *God looked on them, and had reſpect vnto them.* Though they might thinke in regard of the miſereble ſlauery which they indured; that God had quite forgotten them, and his promiſe made to them and their fathers: yet it was otherwiſe, his eye did ſtil behold them. Neither doth the Lord looke vpon us, as an idle beholder, or as one that taketh pleaſure to ſee our miſery; but with compaſſion and a tender regard. As he ſaith in the former caſe, *I haue ſurely ſeene the trouble*
Exod: 3, 7. *of my people which are in Egypt, and haue heard their cry, becauſe of their taske-maſters, and I know their ſorrowes. Therfore I am come downe to deliuer them,*
8. *&c.* And *loe, the crie of the children of*
9. *Iſrael is come vnto me, and I haue alſo ſeene the oppreſſion, wherewith the Egyptians oppreſſe them.* Where we ſee, that the Lord taketh to hart the afflictions of his children; *And his very ſoule is*
Iudg: 10, 19. Zach: 2: 8. *grieued for their miſery*, and it goeth as
Pſal: 56. 8. neare him, as if a man ſhould *touch the apple of his eye.* He regardeth their
Malac: 3. 16. ſighs and groans, and their *teares he putteth in his bottle*: he regiſtreth their words

words and complaints; *There is a book of remembrance written for them that feare him*, and all their *cryes come vp to him*. It is true, that the Lord ſometimes ſeemeth to forget & neglect his children in the time of trouble. As our Sauiour Chriſt being in the ſhip with his Diſciples, was aſleepe, till the ſhip was couered with waues, and they were all like to periſh: When he heard that *Lazarus* his friend whom he loued, was ſicke, he did not preſently goe to viſit him, & to comfort his ſiſters, but abode ſtill two dayes in the place where he was, ſo as *Lazarus* was dead and buried, before he came there. But when he hath ſufficiently tryed and humbled them, he returneth & ſpeedily comforteth them, and ſo diſpoſeth of their afflictions, as he alwaies enableth them to get the victorie. For, as they that had the ouerſight of the wraſtlings and combats among the Heathen, did not ſuffer the combatants to begin the conflict hand ouer head, nor arme them confuſedly, all alike: but making diligent examination, as they ſaw mens bodies and ages, they were careExod: 2. 23.

Iohn 11. 6.

Orig: de prin: lib: 3. cap: 2.

full to match like with like, and to furniſh them with weapons fit for them: In like ſort, the prouidence of God diſpoſeth and ordereth after a moſt equal manner, all thoſe that deſcend into the conflicts of this life, ſo as one encountreth with the fleſh, another with pouertie, another with ſickneſſe, another with infamie, another with perſecution: and putteth vpon euery one of them diuers kindes of armour, and furniſheth them with greater or leſſer ſtrength, as may inable them to ouercome the enemie that is appointed for them. For God is not like the Maſter of the Games before ſpoken of, who when he hath armed the parties, departeth out of the wraſtling place to behold the combat with the reſt. But the Lord ſtandeth by them ſtill, and aideth & aſſiſteth them at euery turne, and continually ſuccoureth them that are weaker with greater ſtrength.

And herein the Lord dealeth with his children, as *Ioſeph* dealt with his brethren when they came into *Egypt* to buy corne. For as *Ioſeph* himſelf was many wayes tryed of the Lord, before he

he was made Ruler of the Land: ſo he likewiſe many wayes tryed and exerciſed his brethren before hee would make himſelfe knowne vnto them, or acknowledge them to be his brethren. Firſt, he tryed them, whether they had truly repented, and were touched with remorſe for the iniurie they had done to him, in that ſo cruelly and vnnaturally they ſold him into *Ægypt*. Gen: 42. 7. &c. to 24.

Secondly, hee tryed them, whether they had attempted any ſuch thing againſt *Beniamin* his brother German, in that hee enjoyned them to bring him with them the next time, that he might ſee him. Ibid: verſ. 20.

Thirdly, when they had brought him, he ſhewed extraordinarie kindneſſe to him aboue the reſt, giuing him fiue times ſo great a portion as he did any of them, and all to try whether they did enuie him or no. Gen: 43. 34.

Fourthly, he tryed them whether they loued their brother *Beniamin* ſo well, that when he alone was detayned, they would all for his ſake come backe againe from their journey. Gen: 44 1. &c. to 14. & 33.

Laſtly, he tryed them whether they loued their father ſo intirely, as that they

Gen: 44. 17. &c. would not returne home without *Benjamin*, which they knew would be intollerable griefe vnto their father. All this while no doubt his brethren were in great perplexitie & much troubled; and ſtill *Ioſeph* made as though he had not regarded them. But his bowels did earne within him towards them, and his heart was aſmuch grieued as theirs, inſomuch as twice he was conſtrained to turne from them and weep. And at the laſt he could refraine no longer, but he cryed out, *I am Ioſeph your brother*. So likewiſe Chriſt Ieſus, our bleſſed Sauiour, who is not aſhamed *to call vs his brethren*, doth ſuffer vs to be exerciſed with many & grieuous afflictions, & ſeemeth ſometimes as though he cared not for vs: but yet in the meane while, *his repentings are rolled togither*, and at the laſt, when hee hath ſufficiently tryed vs, hee will manifeſt himſelfe vnto vs to our vnſpeakable comfort. According as himſelfe ſaith, *He that loueth me, ſhall be loued of my Father, and I will loue him, & will ſhew mine owne ſelfe to him*: That is, as one well noteth, I will loue him by trying his

Gen: 42. 24. & 43. 30. & 45. 1, 2, 3.

Matth: 28. 10. Heb: 2. 11.

Hoſ: 11. 8.

Ioh: 14. 21.

his loue and patience, and when I haue tryed him, I will manifeſt my ſelfe vnto him. And though peraduenture this manifeſtation ſhall not be by any outward deliuerance in this life: yet at the day of Iudgement hee will acknowledge them openly in the ſight of men and Angels. Then he ſhall not be able to containe himſelfe any longer, but ſhall ſay vnto vs with a loude voyce, ſo as all the world ſhall heare; *I am Ieſus your Brother, Come yee bleſſed of my Father, inherit the kingdome prepared for you from the foundations of the world. Mat.* 25.34. For, as the *Ægyptians, and all the houſe of Pharaoh heard the voyce of Ioſeph*, when he reuealed himſelfe vnto his brethren, *Gen:* 45.2. So in the day of Iudgement, when Chriſt ſhall manifeſt himſelfe to his brethren, heauen and earth, and all the Angels in heauen ſhall heare his voice: yea, all the damned, & the whole houſe of hell, ſhall heare it, and ſhall gnaſh their teeth for anger: and gnaw their tongues for griefe of heart to ſee thoſe whom they ſomtimes had in deriſion, and in a parable of reproch, whoſe life

Wisd: 5. 3,4,5. they thought to be madnes, and their end without honour, to be now counted among the children of God, and to haue their portion among the Saints.

Finally, this is another argument of vnspeakeable comfort to the children of God, that the greater their afflictions are, the greater shal their glo-

1 Pet: 4. 14. ry be. As the Apostle *Peter* saith, *If yee be rayled vpon for the name of Christ* (and it is true likewise of all other afflictions) *blessed are yee, for the Spirit of glory, and of God resteth vpon you.* And hereof we haue a worthy example in *Ioseph* before named. For, after the manifold and great calamities which he indured so many yeeres, he was exalted by *Pharaoh*, and as himselfe con-

Gen: 45. 8. fesseth, was made *Lord of all his house, and Ruler through all the land of Ægypt*. And it is worthy to be noted, that for some thirteene yeeres wherein he was afflicted, he was exalted, and ruled in *Ægypt* for the space of foure-score yeeres, as may easily be gathered out of the Storie. For he was seuen-

Gen: 37. 2. & 41. 46. teene yeeres olde, when his brethren sold him away: he was thirtie yeeres old,

old, when he was aduanced by *Pharaoh:* and he liued Gouernour of the land of *Ægypt*, till he was an hundred and ten yeeres old. Beſides, ſuch was the goodneſſe of God vnto him, that for the ſeuerall miſeries which he ſuffered, he receiued a ſeuerall reward. For the hatred of his brethren, hee obtained the fauour of the King and his Nobles. For the contempt and ſcorne which his brethren heaped vpon him, calling him Dreamer, &c. hee was worſhipped of them, with their faces downe to the ground. For the particoloured coat which they ſtript him of, when they caſt him into the pit, he was arayed by *Pharaoh* with a princely robe of fine linnen. In ſteed of the fetters wherewith he was bound in priſon, *Pharaoh* put his own ring on his hand, and a chaine of gold about his necke. In ſteed of the priſon and dungeon where he lay, he was ſet vpon the Kings beſt Chariot, ſaue one, and carried in great pomp throughout the Citie. Whereas before he was contemned of all men, as a ſtranger, as a ſeruant and a priſoner, he is now honoured

& 50. 22.

Gen: 37. 19. & 42. 6.

Gen: 37. 23. & 41. 42.

nored of all men, by bowing the knee at the Kings commandement. In a word, in steade of his fathers house, from which he was exiled and banished, he had dominion in all the land of *Egypt*. So true is that saying euen of an heathen man, *a* The greater torment a man indureth, the greater shall be his glory afterwards. But howsoeuer the Lord doth not alwaies deale thus with his children in this life: yet in the life to come, without all question, they shall finde the trueth of that comfortable promise deliuered by the *Apostle, Our light affliction which is but for a moment, causeth vnto vs a far more excellent and eternall waight of glory.*

Seneca de diuin: Prouid.

2 Cor: 4: 17.

Vse. 3. Thirdly, this Doctrine serueth to admonish vs, that seeing affliction is the lot and portion of Gods children in this life, that therefore wee should prepare for it before it come. The Lord will not haue his children come to Heauen in a pleasant way, that is strewed with rushes, as it were, but *through many tribulations wee must enter into his kingdome.* As *Bernard* saith well, *a* He is not meet for the crowne, that

Acts: 14: 22.

a De cœna Dom: Ser. 6.

that is not yet prepared for the croſſe. And therefore it is good for vs to arme our ſelues before hand, that when they come they may not hit vs on the bare. Wee muſt be carefull to ſtore vp grace and comfort againſt a rainy day, that whatſoeuer ſhall befall vs, wee may be provided to beare it: In our beſt eſtate, wee muſt put our ſelues in a readineſſe to ſuffer aduerſity, whenſoeuer GOD ſhall ſend it. In our greateſt abundance, it is good for vs to thinke of want: in our proſperity, it is good to looke for calamitie: and in our perfecteſt health to remember that ſickneſſe may come. There is nothing that maketh all affliction more bitter and grieuous unto vs, then becauſe it taketh vs many times on the blind ſide, before we ſee it, or dreame of it. Whereas miſerie that is fore-ſeene and premeditated, doth little hurt vs. Affliction is like the *Baſiliske*, of which it is written, that if it ſee a man before he ſee it, it killeth him; but if he ſee it firſt, it hath no power to hurt him. So affliction is moſt terrible to thoſe whom it findeth vnpre-

vnprepared. *Seneca*, though an Heathen man, hath ſpoken well to this purpoſe: [a] If (ſaith hee) thou doeſt not make account, that whatſoeuer can befall, may come vnto thee, thou giueſt aduerſity power and ſtrength againſt thee, which, whoſoeuer ſeeth firſt, hath weakned and abated. And in another place: [b] A wiſe man accuſtometh himſelfe to future euils, and thoſe things which other men make eaſie by long ſuffering, he maketh eaſie by foreſeeing.

[a] *De Tranquil: cap:* 11.

[b] *Epiſt:* 77.

Fourthly, it teacheth vs to be patient in all the afflictions that God layeth vpon vs, becauſe they are his louing corrections, in regard of our daily fals and infirmities. We may not ſay with *Iob, Oh that my griefe were well weighed, and my miſeries were layd together in the ballance: For it would now bee heauier than the ſand of the ſea. And my wound is grieuous without my ſin:* But rather acknowledge that wee haue deſerued far greater puniſhment. as *Dauid* ſaith, *If thou Lord ſtraitly marke ſt our iniquities, O Lord, who ſhall ſtand?* If God ſhould deale with the beſt of vs according to

Iob 6: 2,3. and 34: 6.

Pſal: 130: 3.

our

our deſerts, wee were neuer able to abide it. And therfore, as *Bernard* ſaith well; [c] It is good for vs to beare the rod of correction, leſt wee feele the hammer of confuſion. The more wee ſtruggle and ſtriue vnder the hand of God, the leſſe wee preuaile, and the more wee prouoke him to diſpleaſure, and cauſe him to vſe harder courſes againſt vs. As a father, hauing an vnruly ſon, that will not take correction, bindes him to a forme: But the ſooner we yeeld and ſubmit our ſelues to his his will, and kiſſe his rod, the ſooner we ſhall be deliuered.

[c] *In Pſal: 91: Serm: 9.*

Laſt of all, it ſerueth to reproue the prophane wretches of the world, who inſult ouer the children of God in their miſeries: and doe not ſticke blaſphemouſly to ſay; *What profit* haue theſe holy fellowes, *by keeping Gods commandements, or by walking humbly before the Lord of Hoſts?* Wee neuer regarded Gods ſeruice, but *haue wrought wickedneſſe, and tempted God all our liues*, and yet *wee are ſet vp and deliuered.* We haue *rebelliouſly tranſgreſſed*, euen from our cradles, and yet *our wayes*

Vſe 5.

Mal: 3: 14, 15.

Ierem: 12: 1.

wayes doe prosper, and wee haue wealth at will. But let all such vngodly persons know, first, that it is a grieuous sinne, to adde affliction to those that are in miserie. For howsoeuer God do many times seuerely correct those that transgresse his Law, though they bee neuer so deare vnto him, yet hee will not allow the wicked to insult ouer them, no more then a father that whippeth his sonne for his faults, will suffer his seruants spitefully to taunt and reproch him. Againe, the children of God, though they walke neuer so vprightly before the Lord, yet their reward is not in this life. *It doth not yet appeare what they shall be.* But there *is a crowne of righteousnesse layd vp for them* against the day of Iudgement: & when *Christ which is their life shall appeare; then shall they also appeare with him in glory.* And for themselues, though their prosperitie bee neuer so great for the present, yet is it inconstant, & shall not indure. The Lord *sets them in slipperie places, and casteth them downe into desolation, and suddenly are they destroyed, perished, and horribly consumed.* For

1 Ioh. 3. 2.
2 Tim. 4. 8.
Col. 3. 4.
Psal. 73. 18.

vid: Ask: sem: p: 10: vs: 2:

euen

euen in the midſt of their wealth, they are but fatted and *prepared for the day of ſlaughter*. And thus much ſhall ſuffice for the firſt poynt, which I haue the longer inſiſted on, becauſe it is ſo neceſſary for vs. Ier. 12. 3.

It is good that I was afflicted.] This muſt be vnderſtood of croſſes that are ſanctified, when God giueth grace to make an holy vſe of them. It is true, affliction in it owne nature, is euill, and a tag of Gods vengeance, and a puniſhment for ſin. But, as the bitter waters, which the *Iſraelites* complained of in the wilderneſſe, were made ſweet by a tree, which *Moſes* by Gods direction caſt into them: ſo the Croſſe of *Chriſt* hath ſeaſoned and ſweetned all afflictions to the children of God, which haue grace to profit by them: ſo that now the nature of them is changed and altered, that they are no more a puniſhment of ſinne, but a medicine for the ſinner. Accordíng to that excellent ſpeech of *Dauid*, [a] *bleſſed is the man whom thou chaſteneſt, O Lord, and teacheſt him in thy Law.* If the Lord do ioyne his teaching to his correcti- Exod. 15. 25. Pſal. 94. 12.

on,

on, to cauſe a man wiſely to make vſe thereof, it is a moſt happy and bleſſed condition. Whereunto agreeth that
Heb: 12: 11. ſaying of the *Apoſtle*, *No chaſtiſing for the preſent ſeemeth to bee ioyous but grieuous: but afterwardes it bringeth with it the quiet fruite of righteouſneſſe, vnto them which are thereby exerciſed.* If a man be truly exerciſed with affliction, hee ſhall finde great fruit and benefit by it. So then here wee are taught, that affliction is very profitable and good for the children of God. That God, who by his mighty power
2 Cor: 4: 6. *commanded the light to ſhine out of darkneſſe*, hath ſo ordered the matter in his heauenly wiſedome, that euen thoſe things, which to mans nature, and to fleſh and bloud, are moſt irkeſome and weariſome, ſhould be to his children moſt beneficiall and wholeſome. For (as the Apoſtle ſaith)
Rom: 8: 28. *All things worke togither for the beſt vnto them that loue God.* In that hee ſaith, *all things*, hee excepteth nothing. Not onely proſperity but aduerſity alſo; Not onely good ſucceſſe but loſſes and caſualties: not health onely

onely but ſickneſſe: not life but death alſo, make for the good of thoſe that be godly. And indeed, affliction doth not only miniſter comfort unto them, in that, as we haue heard, it is a pledge of their adoption, but it produceth alſo many bleſſed and gracious effects.

Firſt of all, it is a meanes to purge out the droſſe of that naturall corruption that is within vs. So long as wee enioy proſperity, it is with vs as the Prophet ſaith of *Moab*, wee are like Wine that *is ſetled on his lees, and frozen in his dregges, and hath not beene powred out from veſſell to veſſell.* So we are full of the dregges of naturall corruption, till the Lord by affliction doe refine vs. Affliction (as one ſaith well) is vnto the children of God, as the flaile is to the corne, the file to the yron, and the fire to the golde: As the flaile doth purge the corne from the chaffe, which groweth vp with it: and as the file ſcowreth off the ruſt that ſticketh vpon the yron: and as the fire purifieth the gold from the droſſe: So doth affliction, by Gods mercy, purge away from us that chaffe, that ruſt,

Ier: 48: 11. Zeph: 1. 12.

ruſt, and droſſe of ſinne, that is in our nature. The Gold-ſmith taketh not the gold out of the forge, till hee ſee it well and throughly purified. In like manner, God doth not remooue the afflictions of his children, till they bee throughly refined. In a word, affliction is the Lords pruning knife, whereby hee cutteth away from vs all withered and vnprofitable branches.

Secondly, affliction that is ſanctified, doth bring a man to the ſight of his ſinnes, and to godly ſorrow, and true repentance for the ſame. [a] As ſinne ſhutteth vp a mans eyes, ſo affliction openeth them. And hereof we haue a worthy example in the brethren of *Ioſeph*. For the ſpace of twenty yeeres, they were neuer touched with any remorſe, for their vnnaturall cruelty, in ſelling of him to the *Iſhmaelites*: till at the laſt comming into *Ægypt*, to buy corne, in the time of the famine: and perceiuing *Ioſeph* to ſpeake roughly to them, and to charge them to bee Spies, that came to ſee the weakneſſe of the Land: and fearing impriſonment, or ſome other hard

[a] *Greg. in Mural.*

hard meaſure, then they beganne to call their ſinne to remembrance, and to ſay one to another, *Wee haue verily ſinned againſt our brother, in that wee ſaw the anguiſh of his ſoule when hee beſought vs, and wee would not heare him: therefore is this trouble come vpon vs.* *Geneſis* 42. 21. As one that is faſt aſleepe, will not awake, vnleſſe hee bee rayſed by thruſting, or by ſome ſuch violent motion: ſo many lye ſnorting in the long cuſtome of ſin, & neuer thinke of repentance, till the hand of God bee vpon them. And as the *horſe that ruſheth into the battell,* Ierem. 8. 6. neither feareth the enemy that commeth againſt him, nor is terrified with the dolefull grones of dying perſons, nor with the noyſe of the guns, nor with the ſhaking of the pikes: ſo wicked men are carried headlong to ſin, & neither feare the roaring of the Deuill, nor are moued with the miſerable end of others before their eyes, nor terrified with the feare of Hell. But as the horſe running with violence, being checked by his Rider with a ſharpe bridle, is enforced to ſtay his courſe.

So, when ſinners run into all exceſſe of riot, the Lord in mercie, by one affliction or other, as it were by ſtrong hand, pulleth them back, and cauſeth them to ſee their ſinnes, and ſo bringeth them to repentance. So that wee ſee that God vſeth his corrections as Sermons, to call his children from their ſinnes, which many times are more forcible and effectuall then any verball preaching. According to that ſaying of *S. Auguſtine*, [a] Many men when they feele the ſmart, reforme the fault. Now what greater benefit can there be then this for a man to be brought to vnfained repentance for his ſins, without which there can be no hope of forgiuenes. And therefore *Bernard* ſaith ſweetely. [b] It is a good affliction, that bringeth a man to compunction, and remorſe.

[a] *In Pſal: 50.*

[b] *In Pſal: 32.*

Thirdly, affliction is as a notable meanes to humble the children of God, and to beate downe their pride. So long as all things goe well with vs, and we are free from the croſſe, our fleſh is puffed vp, and can hardly be kept vnder, the leven of old *Adam* is in

in vs, and maketh vs ſwell in pride. As the moone neuer ſuffereth eclipſe but when ſhe is in the full, and then ſhe is alwayes furtheſt diſtant from the ſun: ſo likewiſe when we abound in outward proſperity; ſuch is the fooliſh pride of our hearts, wee are puffed vp, and care leaſt for God, till by ſome affliction or other he humble vs and bring vs downe. Thus was it with the *Prodigall ſon*. As ſoone as hee had got his portion of his father, he was all on flaunt, & knew not himſelfe, hee could ſtand on no ground: but when he had waſted his ſubſtance, and was pinched with pouerty & famine, his pride was danted, & hee was glad to come home by weeping croſſe. So was it with *Hagar* when ſhe had conceiued a child by her maſter *Abraham*; ſhe was preſently ſo lifted vp with pride, that ſhe deſpiſed her miſtris *Sara*, becauſe ſhee was barren. But afterwards, when her miſtris had dealt roughly with her, and made her run away into the wildernes, ſhe cried *peccaui*, and humbled her ſelfe vnder her hands. Yea, *Dauid* himſelfe, though otherwiſe an holy man, had a

Lu: 15:17. &c.

Gen: 16.4.9.

ſpice of this diſeaſe, as himſelfe confeſ-
Pſal. 30. 6, 7. ſeth, *In my proſperity* (ſaith hee) *I ſayd, I ſhall neuer bee moued. For thou, Lord, of thy goodnes, hadſt made my mountaine to ſtand ſtrong.* See, how ſoone a man is
Aug. in Pſal: 56 apt to forget himſelfe, if hee enioy but a little proſperity. But alas, the caſe was ſoone altered with him. For as he ſayth in the next words, *The Lord did but hide his face,* and bring him into ſome affliction, and ſtraitway hee *was troubled.* And therfore, in this reſpect, affliction is very neceſſary and profitable, becauſe it cauſeth a man to know himſelfe: As we ſee by common experience, when God afflicteth a man, either with ignominy and diſgrace in his name, or with pouerty in his eſtate, or with ſicknes in his body, or with loſſe of children, or any ſuch like croſſe and calamity, though before hee were neuer ſo proud, and carried himſelfe neuer ſo high; yet then he beginneth to droope, and letteth his feathers fall.
[a] *Plut: in Apoth: Reg: & Imp.* [a] *Antigonus*, though an Heathen King, when hee was taken with a little ſickneſſe, and had recouered thereof, hee could make this good conſtruction of it,

it, namely, that it was well for him, that hee had beene ſicke and ill: for his diſeaſe had taught him, that ſeeing hee was but a mortall man, he ſhould not too much lift vp his Spirit. And this is the goodneſſe of God towards vs, as Saint *Auguſtine* ſaith, [b] That becauſe the ſweetneſſe of earthly bleſſings doth deceiue vs, and puffe vs vp, we ſhould be humbled by the bitterneſſe of affliction.

[b] *Auguſt: de vera Relig.*

Fourthly, affliction is a meanes to reforme the Godly, and to make them better: That which *Salomon* ſpeaketh of children, is true alſo of aged perſons, that *follie is bound in their hearts, but the rod of correction ſhall driue it away from them*. And therefore the Apoſtle ſaith well, That when God correcteth & chaſteneth his children, it is but to *nurture* them (as a louing father doth his ſonne) for their reformation and amendment. *When wee are iudged*, ſaith he, *we are nurtured of the Lord, &c.* The Lord knoweth, that a ſonne ſet at liberty, runneth into ſuch licentious courſes, that hee is a ſhame to his father, and a griefe to his mo-

Prou. 22. 15.

1 Cor. 11. 32.

ther, and therefore hee will not ſuffer his children, whom hee loueth moſt tenderly, to goe on in their ſinnes, leſt his name ſhould bee diſhonoured, and his holy Goſpel euill ſpoken of, but by corrections and croſſes laboureth to reclaime them. As *Iob* ſaith, *Hee openeth the eares of men, euen by their corrections which hee hath ſealed: That hee might cauſe man to turne away from his enterprize, &c.* And *Salomon* hath a ſpeech to the ſame purpoſe, that *corrections for inſtruction are the way of life,* to keepe and preſerue a man from whooredome, and ſuch like ſinnes: [a] So that this (as *Bernard* ſaith) muſt needes be a happy and bleſſed affliction, that maketh a man better.

Iob 33. 16, 17.

Prou. 6. 23.

[a] *De præcepto & diſpenſat.*

Fiftly, affliction is an excellent means to inforce vs, and ſtir vs vp to prayer. Yea, euen they that neuer thought to pray, as *Atheiſts*, and wicked perſons, when any trouble lyeth vpon them, are driuen to pray, whether they will or no. As the Prophet ſayth, That ſuch as rebell againſt God, in the time of famine, when they want corne and wine, *will howle vpon their beds.* And

Hoſ. 7. 14.

Dauid

Dauid reckoneth vp a bed-roll of ſuch perſons. Some that *wandred out of the way in the wildernes, and found no city to dwell in, both hungry and thirſty, their ſoule fainting in them.* Others that *dwell in darkneſſe, and in the ſhadow of death:* that is, poore priſoners, *being bound in miſery and yron.* Others being caſt on their ſicke beds, *whoſe ſoule abhorreth all manner of meat, and they are brought to deaths doore.* Others in danger of ſhipwracke, *whoſe ſoule melteth for trouble, &c.* Howſoeuer, peraduenture in the time of their proſperity, they cared but a little for the Lord, yet now they *cryed to him in their trouble, & he deliuered them out of their diſtreſſe:* So that trouble & diſtreſſe will make any man cry vnto the Lord, & betake him to his prayers. So was it with the Mariners that entertained *Ionah*, when they were afraid of their liues, by reaſon of the mighty tempeſt that God ſent vpon them, they *cryed euery man to his God.* And the proud King of *Nineueh*, with all his people, when they heard the ſudden deſtruction that was threatned againſt them by the preaching

Pſal. 107. 4, 5. 10. 18. 26. Verſe 6, 13, 19, 28. Ionah 1. 5.

ching of *Ionah*, they *cried mightily vnto God*. And that wicked *Manasseh*, *who did very much euill in the sight of the Lord to anger him: shedding innocent bloud exceeding much, till he replenished Ierusalem from corner to corner*: yet when God brought vpon him the Captaines of the King of *Assur*, which tooke him, and put him in fetters, and bound him in chaines, and carried him to *Babel*, *then when he was in tribulation, he prayed to the Lord his God, and humbled himselfe greatly before the God of his fathers*. Yea, the godly themselues are neuer so fit to pray, as when they are in affliction. Though they be carefull to pray continually: yet they neuer pray with so great deuotion and feruency, as when some heauy crosse or calamity is vpon them. For then feeling their misery, and their owne inabilitie to helpe themselues, they more earnestly flie vnto the Lord for succor. As the Prophet saith, *In that day*, that is, in the day of trouble, *shall a man looke to his maker, and his eies shall looke to the holy one of Israel*. And *in their affliction they will seeke*

and 7, 8.
2 Chro: 33: 6.
2 King: 21: 16.
1 Thess: 5. 17.
Esay: 17: 7.
Hosea: 5: 15.

ſeek me diligently, ſaith the Lord. In our proſperity we are all of vs both good & bad, too ful of ſecurity, as though we ſtood in no need of God. As the Lord complaineth of *Ieconiah*, ſaying, *I ſpake to thee when thou waſt in proſperity: but thou ſaydſt I will not heare &c.* And ſo *Dauid* ſaith of the wicked that becauſe *his wayes alway proſper, and the iudgements of God are high aboue his ſight:* therefore he is ſo proud, that *hee neuer ſeeketh after God.* And the *Prophet Ieremiah* compareth ſuch perſons to the *wilde Aſſe in the wilderneſſe, that ſnuffeth vp the winde at her pleaſure: and it is in vaine to ſeeke to turne her backe, but in her moneth*, that is, in her foaling time, then a man may deale with her. As the little Chickens, when the weather is faire, and there is no danger towards, ſtraggle a great way from the Henne: but if any Hayle ſhewer come vpon them, or a Kite houer ouer them, then they are glad to runne vnder her wings for ſhelter. And as the Stagge, when he is at liberty, will not come neere a man: but when he is hotly purſued with the dogges,

Ierem: 22. 21.

Pſal: 10. 4, 5.

Ierem: 2, 24.

dogges, he will runne to him of his owne accord for ſuccour: So it fareth oftentimes with vs, when we are at eaſe, and nothing doth moleſt vs, wee turne our backes vpon God: but when wee are brought into diſtreſſe or danger, we are glad to repaire vnto him for helpe. As one confeſſeth of himſelfe (and it is our caſe as well as his) [a] If I could be well without thee, I would neuer come at thee. As the water, when it is at large, and hath ſcope enough, runneth with a ſtill and ſilent motion, but being brought into a ſtrait, it maketh a great noyſe: In like manner, when a man is at large, he looketh not much to this dutie of prayer: but when he is in affliction and ſtraites, he will excite and ſtirre vp himſelfe thereunto. So did the children of Iſrael, in the time of their bondage, they *ſighed, and cryed, and made their moane vnto GOD.* And we read in many places of the Booke of *Iudges*; That howſoeuer in their proſperitie they were vntoward & careleſſe of God, yet when God raiſed vp any new enemies againſt them, they

[a] *Si bene eſſ. m ſine te, non ve. nirem ad te.*

Exo: 2.23, 24.

chap: 3. & 4.

they cryed vnto him. And *Dauid* ſaith of himſelf, that although before, while he thought his mountain to be ſtrong enough (as we haue heard) he was fooliſh and proud: yet when God hid his face from him, then he *cryed vnto the Lord, & prayed vnto him.* And we may obſerue, that the moſt of his Pſalmes were made, when he was in affliction. Yea, our Sauiour Chriſt himſelfe, tho all his life time he was much conuerſant in prayer, ſometime riſing early in the morning before day, and ſometime ſpending the whole night therein: yet he neuer prayed more earneſtly, nor more feruently, than immediately before his paſſion: when, as the Apoſtle ſaith, *he offered vp prayers and ſupplications with ſtrong crying & teares:* yea, he was ſo feruent, that *his ſweat was like drops of blond trickling downe to the ground.* We ſee then by all that hath beene ſpoken, that affliction is as it were a whetſtone, to ſet an edge vpon our deuotion, and ſharpen our hearts to prayer.

Pſal: 30. 8.

Marc: 1. 35.

Heb: 5. 7.

Luk: 22. 44.

Sixtly, affliction doth containe the children of God in obedience. It is with

with the beſt of vs, as *Agiſelaus* ſaid of the *Athenians*; that [a] When they were at libertie they were nought, but when they were in bondage, they were good: ſo we in our proſperitie doe ſtart aſide like a broken bow; but when affliction commeth, we ſubmit our ſelues to the Lords yoke. The people of Iſrael, when the hand of God was vpon them, either by warre, or famine, or any other calamitie, caried themſelues very religiouſly, & walked in obedience vnto his will. But when God *caried them vp to the high places of the earth* (as *Moſes* ſaith) *that they might eat the fruits of the fields: when he cauſed them to ſucke honie out of the ſtone, and oyle out of the hard rocke: when he gaue them butter of kine, and milke of ſheep, with fat of lambs and rams fed in Baſhan, with the fat of the graines of wheat: and made them drinke the red liquor of the grape: then that they ſhould haue bin vpright, when they waxed fat, ſpurned with their heels: they were fat, they were groſſe, they were laden with fatneſſe: therefore they forſooke God that made them, and regarded not the ſtrong God of their ſaluation.* And this

a *Liberi mali ſunt, ſerui boni.*

Deut: 32. 13, 14, 15.

this doth *Dauid* confesse of himselfe, when he saith, *Before I was afflicted, I went astray, but now I keepe thy word.* Psal: 119.67. And the Church acknowledgeth, that before the *Lord corrected her, shee was like an vntamed calfe.* Ierem: 31.18. Though man were created after the Image of God, and aduanced to great honour, yet if God let him alone, he will become like vnto *the beasts that perish*, as *Dauid* saith. Psal: 49.20. And therefore, the Lord threatneth the rebellious Iewes, that *he will stop their way with thornes, and make an hedge, that they should not finde their pathes.* Hosea 2.6. Where he sheweth that necessitie requireth, that he should hold them in with seuere discipline, & sharpe corrections, comparing them to wanton and vnruly cattell, which must be kept in with thornes & hedges, lest they leap out of the pasture, & go astray.

Seuenthly, it helpeth to tame and subdue the vnrulinesse of the flesh, that it may be in better subjection to the Spirit. The flesh is like an head-strong horse, which if he be fatted and pampered in the stable for a while, waxeth so frampall, as he can hardly be ruled,

and

and brought to acknowledge his Rider: So this ſtubborne fleſh of ours, if it injoy but a litle proſperitie; it ſtraitghtway groweth ſo rebellious, that it will not be *ſubiect to the law of God.* And as the Horſe-rider, to pull downe the ſtomack of ſuch an Horſe, taketh away his prouender, & feedeth him with ſtraw and chaffe: and if that will not ſerue, handleth him roughly, and beateth him: So doth the Lord with our fleſh: he taketh away thoſe outward bleſſings which puffed it vp, and made it ſwell, and loadeth it with one affliction after an other, that ſo he *may beat it downe, and bring it into ſubiection.* And this is a great benefit, to haue the fleſh, with the curſed luſts and affections thereof, mortified and ſubdued in this manner. For it is one of thoſe deadly enemies of our ſoules, with which we muſt fight and incounter while we liue. Now as he that were to enter a ſingle combat, with an aduerſarie, that were ſtronger than himſelfe, would be glad of ſome bodie would firſt weaken and foyle him, that ſo he might the more eaſily ouercome him:

Rom: 8. 7.

1 Cor: 9. 27.

Galat: 5. 17.

him: In like manner, the children of God haue cauſe to reioyce, that it doth pleaſe the Lord by outward calamities to tame the fleſh, and to tread it vnder their feet, that ſo they may wᵗʰ leſſe difficultie & danger get the maſterie of it.

Eightly, it is a meanes to withdraw our hearts from the loue of the world, & to raiſe them vp to the deſire of heauenly things. Such is the corruption of our nature, that we doate too much on this world. We are like to fooliſh children, that would not willingly be weaned from the breaſt, & therefore their mother annoynteth the nibbles of her breaſt with ſome bitter thing, to make them out of loue with it. So, if wee might haue our wills, wee would alwayes hang vpon the breaſts of the world, & would neuer leaue ſucking, if the Lord did not powder our deſires with the croſſe, and make them bitter to vs. The children of Iſrael, though they were grieuouſly afflicted in Egypt, to make them more earneſtly deſire to poſſeſſe the land of *Canaan*: yet we ſee, how hardly they were brought to depart from thence. Yea,

when

Num: 14.3,4. Exod: 16.3. Num: 11. 5. when they were in the way to *Canaan*, they would often haue returned backe againe into Egypt to their *flesh-pots, their fish, their cucumbers, their pepons, &c.* If they had liued in preferment there, and enjoyed the fat of the Land, as they did in *Iosephs* time, it would, no doubt, haue bin an hard matter to haue perswaded them to depart: So it fareth with the most of vs: we are in this world, as in a Sea of miserie, neuer out of one danger or other; yet such is our folly, we loue to be here still. What would we do if we neuer had any thing to molest vs? It is a lamentable thing to consider, that our mindes should be so dazeled with the glittering shew of riches, pleasures, and honours, as they cannot look to heauen, that our hearts should be so oppressed and weighed downe with couetousnes & ambition, that they cannot raise vp themselues vnto celestiall cogitations, and that our soules should be so ensnared with the pleasant inticements of the flesh, that they seeke for their felicitie vpon the earth. And therefore the Lord in mercy to preuent this euill, doth by

Gen: 45.18. & 47.11.

daily

daily experience of miſeries, put his children in minde of the vanity of all earthly things, leſt they ſhould promiſe to themſelues a conſtant and continuall peace in this world, hee ſuffereth them many times to be diſquieted and moleſted with warres, with tumults, with robberies, and other iniuries: leſt they ſhould with too much greedineſſe gape after brittle & inconſtant riches, or ſhould too much reſt in thoſe which they doe poſſeſſe, God bringeth them to pouerty, ſomtimes by baniſhment, ſometimes by barrenneſſe of the earth, ſometimes by fire, ſometimes by one meanes, and ſometimes by another, leſt they ſhould take too much delight in the comfortes of marriage, he eyther cauſeth them to be vexed with the ſhrewdneſſe of their wiues, or humbleth them with lewd children, or afflicteth them with the loſſe and death of their children. And if it fall out that the Lord doe ſpare them in all theſe things: yet, leſt they ſhould either ſwell with vaine-glorie, or reioyce with fooliſh confidence, he chaſteneth them with ſickneſſe and

Cal: inſtit lib 3. cap: 9. ſect. 1.

diſeaſes, that they may learne, how fraile and vnſtable all earthly things are, and may lift vp their eyes to heauen, where that incorruptible crowne of glory is laid vp for them. And thus the Lord in his vnſpeakeable goodnes many times diminiſheth the health of our bodies, that we may more earneſtly deſire the ſaluatiō of our ſoules. He taketh away the things of this life, that we may more carefully ſeeke after the things of a better life. So that afflictions are like to a great ſtorme at Sea, to make the godly wiſh to be in the hauen. As the waters of the deluge, the more they increaſed, the higher they bare vp the Arke: So the waters of tribulation, the greater they are, the higher they lift vp the ſoule towardes heauen: according to that ſpeech of *Bernard*, [a] By the Lords corrections we contemne earthly things, and loue heauenly. And therefore, as *Zeno* [b] hauing ſuffered ſhipwracke, became the Scholler of *Crates*, and ſtudied *Philoſophie*, and after ſaid, it was an happy ſhipwracke that made him affect ſuch excellent knowledge: So may wee ſay much

Philip. 1. 23.

[a] *De cœna dom. ſerm.* 10.

[b] *Diog. Laertius in vita Zenonis.*

much more truly; It was a bleſſed ſickneſs, a bleſſed pouerty, a bleſſed impriſonment &c. that cauſed vs to looke towards the kingdome of heauen.

Ninthly, affliction doeth ſaue the children of God from hell & condemnation. If God ſhould let vs alone, we would neuer reſt, till we run headlong to hell: as fooliſh childrē, if they be not hindered, will run into the ditch. And therefore, it is the Lords mercy, to lay the rodde vpon our backs, that ſo we may bethinke our ſelues of the danger wherein wee ſtand, and may labour to preuent it. And this is that which *Iob* ſaith, that the Lord *openeth the eares of men by corrections*, that ſo he may *keepe backe their ſoules from the pit, and that there life ſhould not paſſe by the ſword.* Iob: 33.16.18. And the Apoſtle hath a ſaying to the ſame purpoſe, that *when we are iudged, we are chaſtened of the Lord, becauſe we ſhould not be condemned with the world.* 1 Cor: 11. 32. When a man is deſperately about to caſt himſelfe into the fire, or to drowne himſelfe in the water, can any do him a greater benefit then to preuent him, and ſaue his life? So there cannot be a

diſeaſes, that they may learne, how fraile and vnſtable all earthly things are, and may lift vp their eyes to heauen, where that incorruptible crowne of glory is laid vp for them. And thus the Lord in his vnſpeakeable goodnes many times diminiſheth the health of our bodies, that we may more earneſtly deſire the ſaluatiõ of our ſoules. He taketh away the things of this life, that we may more carefully ſeeke after the things of a better life. So that afflictions are like to a great ſtorme at Sea, to make the godly wiſh to be in the hauen. As the waters of the deluge, the more they increaſed, the higher they bare vp the Arke: So the waters of tribulation, the greater they are, the higher they lift vp the ſoule towardes heauen: according to that ſpeech of *Bernard*, [a] By the Lords corrections we contemne earthly things, and loue heauenly. And therefore, as *Zeno* [b] hauing ſuffered ſhipwracke, became the Scholler of *Crates*, and ſtudied *Philoſophie*, and after ſaid, it was an happy ſhipwracke that made him affect ſuch excellent knowledge: So may wee ſay much

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Ninthly, affliction doeth ſaue the children of God from hell & condemnation. If God ſhould let vs alone, we would neuer reſt, till we run headlong to hell: as fooliſh childrē, if they be not hindered, will run into the ditch. And therefore, it is the Lords mercy, to lay the rodde vpon our backs, that ſo we may bethinke our ſelues of the danger wherein wee ſtand, and may labour to preuent it. And this is that which *Iob* ſaith, that the Lord *openeth the eares of men by corrections*, that ſo he may *keepe backe their ſoules from the pit, and that there life ſhould not paſſe by the ſword.* Iob: 33.16.18. And the Apoſtle hath a ſaying to the ſame purpoſe, that *when we are iudged, we are chaſtened of the Lord, becauſe we ſhould not be condemned with the world.* 1 Cor: 11. 32. When a man is deſperately about to caſt himſelfe into the fire, or to drowne himſelfe in the water, can any do him a greater benefit then to preuent him, and ſaue his life? So there cannot be a

diſeaſes, that they may learne, how fraile and vnſtable all earthly things are, and may lift vp their eyes to heauen, where that incorruptible crowne of glory is laid vp for them. And thus the Lord in his vnſpeakeable goodnes many times diminiſheth the health of our bodies, that we may more earneſtly deſire the ſaluatiõ of our ſoules. He taketh away the things of this life, that we may more carefully ſeeke after the things of a better life. So that afflictions are like to a great ſtorme at Sea, to make the godly wiſh to be in the hauen. As the waters of the deluge, the more they increaſed, the higher they bare vp the Arke: So the waters of tribulation, the greater they are, the higher they lift vp the ſoule towardes heauen: according to that ſpeech of *Bernard*, [a] By the Lords corrections we contemne earthly things, and loue heauenly. And therefore, as *Zeno* [b] hauing ſuffered ſhipwracke, became the Scholler of *Crates*, and ſtudied *Philoſophie*, and after ſaid, it was an happy ſhipwracke that made him affect ſuch excellent knowledge: So may wee ſay much

Philip. 1. 23.

[a] *De cœna dom. ſerm:* 10.

[b] *Diog. Laertius in vita Zenonis.*

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greater benefit to vs, then when we are ready to drowne our ſelues in perdition by our ſinnes, that the Lord by his corrections ſhould ſtay vs, and hold vs backe.

Laſt of all, affliction doth fitte and prepare vs for the kingdome of Heauen. As the *Apoſtle* ſaith of the *Theſſalonians*, that *by perſecutions and tribulations which they ſuffered, they were counted worthy of the kingdome of God.* 2. *Theſſ.* 1. 5. As the parching heat of the Sun ripeneth the corne, and maketh it fitte to bee carryed into the barn: ſo doth affliction ripen the godly, that they may be meet to be gathered into Gods barne. And this is done two wayes: Firſt, becauſe by afflictions (as wee haue heard) wee are purged and purified from our ſins, which elſe would hinder vs from comming there. For *no vncleane thing ſhall enter into Gods kingdome.* As gold muſt firſt be purified in the fire, before it be laid vp in the kings treaſury: and as wheat muſt be cleanſed from the chaffe, before it be laid vp in the garner: ſo muſt it be with vs. Affliction is the fire that muſt

Apoc. 21. 27.

Prou. 25. 4.

must purge vs, to make vs *vessels of honour* for the house of God : and the fan that must clense vs, to make vs pure wheat for his garner. In the building of *Salomons* temple, all the stones were hewen and fitted in the quarry, before they were brought thither : and *There was neither hammer, nor axe, nor any toole of yron heard in the temple, while it was in building.* So in the kingdome of heauen, which is the spirituall house of God, all *the liuing stones* thereof must be hewen, and squared, and fitted by afflictions in this life. Secondly, affliction prepareth vs for heauen, because it is a meanes to worke holinesse in vs; *Without which no man shall euer see the Lord*, as the Apostle saith. We see then by all these gracious effects & blessed fruits which affliction bringeth with it, that *Dauid* had good cause to say, *It is good for mee, that I haue beene afflicted.* And therefore we may conclude with Saint *Augustine*, *a* The Lord smiteth vs that hee may heale vs, and killeth vs that wee may not die from him.

2 Tim: 2:21.

1 Kings: 6:7.

Heb. 12. 14.

a *Confess: lib. 2.*

This Doctrine (that wee may make *Vse* 1.

ſome vſe of it) doth teach vs firſt of all, to labour to perſwade our ſelues of this great and excellent good that affliction bringeth with it, that ſo we may *count it exceeding ioy when we fall into it.* I confeſſe it ſeemeth otherwiſe to fleſh and bloud. For, as the *Apoſtle* ſaith truely, *no chaſtiſing for the preſent ſeemeth to be ioyous, but grieuous.* As children are loath to feele the ſmart of the rodde, nay, they can not indure to heare of it; ſo is our corrupt nature loath and vnwilling to taſte of any correction. It is death to vs to hear that we muſt be *puniſhed & chaſtened euery morning:* and that we muſt be *fed with the bread of tears, & haue tears to drinke in great meaſure.* It is a wearyſome thing to be alwayes ſicke & languiſhing, ſo as *the ſoule abhorreth all manner of meat:* to be continually full of cramps and aches & pains, ſo as neither a mans *couch can relieue him, nor his bed bring comfort vnto him,* as *Iob* ſaith. But when he *layeth him downe, he ſaith, when ſhall I riſe, and the night bee gone?* and, *he is full with toſſing to and fro vnto the dawning of the day.* The like

Iames: 1.2.

Heb: 12.11.

Pſal: 73.14. and 10.5. and 107.18.

Iob: 7.13. 4.

like may be ſaid of all other afflictions, they are as vnſauoury to the fleſh, as *the white of an egge without ſalt.* And Iob 6.6. therefore our *Sauiour Chriſt* himſelfe, as he was man, and ſo partaker of our Heb.2.14. infirmities, felt in his fleſh a loathneſſe to haue taſted of that bitter cup of his Paſſion, *his ſoule was heauie vnto the* Matth.26.38, *death,* and therefore hee beſought his 39. Father, that *if it were poſſible it might paſſe from him:* [a] which ſpeech, as *Bernard* noteth, ſeemeth to be the ſpeech of the fleſh, & not of the ſpirit, becauſe he addeth a little after, *the ſpirit is willing, but the fleſh is weake.* But we muſt not meaſure afflictions by the preſent ſmart we feele in them, but by the benefit that followes after them. For, as we haue heard, though the ſenſe of the preſent griefe bee bitter, yet the fruit that commeth after is moſt ſweet and pleaſant. Affliction is to the ſoule, as *Phyſick* to the body. But as commonly, that *Phyſicke* which is moſt wholſome, is withall moſt vntoothſome: ſo that affliction, which is moſt profitable, is for the moſt part moſt diſtaſteful. As the plant which they call *Chriſts thorne,* is

[a] *Ser. in feria 5. in Paraſc.*

Plin lib 24. cap.14.

extreme bitter both in the root and in the leaues, & in the branches: but yet is very medicinable (for the iuyce of the root cleareth the eyes, the ſeed bringeth downe the after-birth, &c.) So affliction, though it bee in it ſelfe moſt bitter and vnſauoury, yet the Lord, our moſt skilfull *Phyſician*, maketh moſt ſoueraigne medicines thereof, to *heale the infirmities* of his children, whereby it becommeth more profitable to them than (by reaſon of their corruption) proſperity could euer be. For as dead fleſh, if it be kept in ſweet water, will corrupt and be full of wormes: but if it be kept in ſalt brine, it will bee preſerued long, and become wholeſome meat for the vſe of man: ſo the children of God, if they abound with proſperity, are eaſily corrupted; but being exerciſed by the croſſe, they are preſerued from the infection of ſin.

Pſal. 103. 3.

Secondly, it teacheth vs to endeuor by all meanes, to profit by the afflictions that God layeth vpon vs, that ſo we may haue experience of this good, which they bring with them: that ſeeing God intendeth them for our benefit,

nefit, ſo wee may not by our owne ſtubbornneſſe and vntowardnes, peruert them to our hurt. It is as grieuous a ſin as wee can commit, to harden our hearts when Gods hand is vpon vs. As the Lord complained of the *Iewes*; *I haue ſmitten your children in vaine, they haue receiued no correction.* Ierem.2.30. And in another place, *O Lord* (ſaith the Prophet) *Thou haſt ſtricken them, and they haue not ſorrowed: thou haſt conſumed them, but they haue refuſed to receiue correction: they haue made their faces harder than a ſtone, and haue refuſed to returne.* and 5.3. And ſo it is ſaid of *Ahaz*, that *in the time of his tribulation, hee did treſpaſſe more againſt the Lord.* 2 Chro.28.22. Let vs therefore bleſſe our ſelues from this height of iniquity, and let vs pray to God, to ſanctifie all our corrections and chaſtizements vnto vs, that wee may bee bettered and reformed by them: So ſhall they be infallible arguments of his fatherly loue towards vs: otherwiſe they will be fearefull tokens of his wrath, and certaine pledges of our condemnation.

Thirdly, it teacheth vs to bee patient *Vſe.* 3.

ent vnder the Croſſe: For, as the Apoſtle ſaith, *If we haue had the fathers of our bodies which corrected vs, wee gaue them reuerence: ſhould we not much rather bee in ſubiection vnto the Father of Spirits, that wee may liue?* eſpecially conſidering that it is ſo much for our good. A man that is ſicke of a burning feuer, willingly ſuffereth himſelfe to be let bloud, becauſe he knoweth it is a meanes to abate the violence of this diſeaſe. A man that is pained with the ſtone, patiently yeeldeth himſelfe to be cut and tortured by the *Phyſician*, becauſe hee knoweth it is a means to preſerue his life. A man that is wounded, meekly ſuffereth the *Surgeon* to launch and ſearch his wound to the bottome, and with ſharpe corasiues to eat out the feſtered core of the vlcer, becauſe he knoweth he cannot otherwiſe be cured. Shall all theſe endure, and that with admirable patience, ſo much torment for the good of their bodies, and ſhall not wee much more be willing, to ſuffer Gods ſharpeſt corrections for the benefit of our ſoules? eſpecially, ſeeing our owne

Heb. 12. 9.

ſinnes

ſinnes haue deſerued the greateſt puniſhments that GOD can inflict. As the Prophet ſaith, *I will beare the wrath of the Lord, becauſe I haue ſinned againſt him.* Micah 7.9. And therefore, let vs learne meekely and obediently, to ſubmit our ſelues to the will of God, in this caſe. And, as he ſendeth afflictions with a right hand, let vs not take them with a left. An old Courtier that had ſerued *Caligula*, *Claudius*, and *Nero*, three cruell Tyrants, Emperours of *Rome*, being demanded, how hee could eſcape the dangers of thoſe times, wherein ſo many worthy Citizens were put to death. Hee anſwered: Euen by taking benefits thankfully, and by putting vp iniuries patiently. If hee could for his owne ſafety ſubdue his minde, to beare with patience the open iniuries of ſuch monſtrous Tyrants: how much more ſhould wee ſubmit our ſelues, with all meekneſſe, to beare the louing corrections of our moſt mercifull Father? And howſoeuer it may ſeeme, that God layeth heauier and ſorer afflictions vpon vs, than vpon many others: yet

yet we muſt conſider, that he knoweth the corruption and hardneſſe of our hearts to be ſuch as could not be ſubdued with lighter corrections. [a] An hard knot, as the prouerb is, muſt haue an hard wedge. The Phyſition maketh his potions milder or ſtronger, as the qualitie of the ſickneſſe doth require. In like manner the Lord tempereth his corrections according to our diſpoſition: if he ſee vs tractable, he dealeth more gently with vs: if we be vntamed and rebellious, he layeth it on, and maketh vs feele the ſmart. Neither will he euer ceaſe to follow vs with one calamitie after an other, till he haue brought vs to our knees, and cauſed vs to humble our ſelues ſufficiently vnder his hand.

[a] *Malo modo malus cuneus.*

That I may learne thy ſtatutes.] Here the Prophet doth particularly declare that which before hee had generally propounded. Where by *learning* hee doth not vnderſtand that contemplatiue and ſpeculatiue learning which ſwimmeth in the braine, and is gotten by hearing and reading of the word of God: but that particular learning, which

which is gotten by experience. In a word, his meaning is this, that hee felt the truth and comfort of the word, more powerfull and effectuall in his afflictions, than at any time before, and that made him more carefull to liue godly, when the crosse was remoued, and the trouble gone. From hence we learne, that the godly doe feele the fruit of their afflictions, and are made better by them, when they are past and gone. They are not onely good for the present, while they feele the smart; for so an hypocrite may seeme to be: but the benefit of their afflictiõs remaineth with them all the dayes of their liues. A proofe hereof we haue in the example of *Manasseh*, who did not onely humble himselfe greatly before the Lord, as we haue heard before, *when he was in tribulation.* 2 Chron: 33. But when *God was intreated of him, and* 12, *heard his prayer, & brought him againe* 13, *to Ierusalem into his kingdome*, then he reformed himselfe from his wicked courses, and restored the true worship of God. *He tooke away the strange gods,* 15. *and the Image out of the house of the Lord,*

Lord, and all the Altars which himſelfe had built before, and caſt them out of the Citie. And he prepared the Altar of the
2 Chr: 33. 16. *Lord, and offered ſacrifice thereon, and commaunded Iudah to ſerue the Lord God of Iſrael.* The like we ſee in that
Iſa: 38. 3. good king *Hezekiah*, who was not only religiouſly and deuoutly affected in the time of ſickneſſe, when he was paſt hope of life (for there is none ſo wretched, but will make a ſhew of holineſſe
9. &c. then) but *when he was recouered of his ſickneſs*, he made a holy Song of thanksgiuing, wherin he profeſſeth the care, that he would haue of Gods ſeruice for the time to come: So that we ſee, the fruit of affliction endureth for euer vnto the children of God: otherwiſe they neuer made true vſe of it, they neuer reaped any profit by it. But I will not ſtand any longer in the proſecuting of this point.

It ſerueth for the iuſt reproofe of all thoſe that make a ſhew to be ſomewhat good, in the time of trouble, but when it is gone, they are as bad as euer they were. So long as they feele the hand of God vpon them, they promiſe

promiſe great reformation, but all is but hypocriſie. For they are no ſooner enlarged, but they returne vnto their former courſes with as much greedineſſe, as euer did the dog to his vomit. And herein they are like children, who while the rod is on their backs, promiſe great matters, that they will neuer do the like againe: but they remember that promiſe no longer than they feele the ſmart of the rod. And this wee ſee in the example of *Pharaoh*, who ſo long as the plague was heauy vpon him & his land, made no ſmall ſhew of repentance, and promiſed, that if *Moſes* and *Aaron* would pray for him, that the plague might be remoued, hee would *let the people goe, they ſhould tarry no longer*. *Exodus* 9. 27, 28. and 10. 16, 17. But as ſoone as euer God had ſpared him at their intreatie, he was ſo farre from performing his promiſe, as his heart was more hardened, than euer it was before. Iron, whileſt it is in the fire, is ſoft and pliable, and may be wrought into any forme: but if it be taken from the fire a litle, it ſtraitway returneth 2 Pet: 2. 22.

neth to his former hardneſſe. In like manner, many men, while they are in the furnace of affliction, ſeeme to haue ſoft and melting hearts, and make great ſhew of remorſe for their ſinnes: but afterwards, their hearts become as hard as the Adamant. And thus men doe vſe their repentance like an olde garment; they caſt it about them in a ſtorme or a ſhewer: but aſſoone as it is faire weather, they lay it by againe. But let vs be carefull to make ſuch an holy and ſanctified vſe of our afflictions, when they be vpon vs, that we may be the better for them all our life after. This point is neceſſarie to be inlarged, but I haue handled it elſe-where; and therefore I will inſiſt no longer vpon it at this time.

a In the repentance of *Peter* and *Iudas*.

FINIS.

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[a] In the repentance of *Peter* and *Judas*.

FINIS.